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AMERICAN PRODIGALS: THE REJECTION AND REDEMPTION OF MORMONS IN THE AMERICAN WEST, 1890 - 1930

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by

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ABSTRACT

The Mormons of the American West were a marginalized people; their identity as American citizens were repeatedly questioned, challenged and rejected during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Their beliefs, practices, and identities were defied, dismissed, and exploited. Even America's popular culture represented them as villains and as outsiders. Yet through this medium, Mormons recognized the traits of western culture defined, to some extent, American identity. By leveraging the terms of western mythology to their advantage, Mormons mitigated their marginalized status to become the version of themselves that Americans desired.

Incorporating the fields of American studies, folklore, gender studies, western studies, religious studies, geography, art, and literature, this dissertation investigates how members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints adapted the mythology of the American West in their quest to assimilate into the American ethnic and religious mainstream between the years 1890 and 1930. I contend that after recognizing American's growing affinity for the symbols, rhetoric, images, icons, characters, and geography of the American West readily available to the public in the form of popular culture, Mormons employed the components of these Western mythical narratives for their own religious, political, economic, and cultural gain. After establishing the dissertation's core questions and methodology in Chapter One, Chapter Two examines the planning, advertisements, and proceedings of the 1897 Utah Pioneer Jubilee as evidence of Mormons rescripting their pioneer past and emphasizing their pioneer identity. Chapter Three investigates the evolution of Mormon masculinity, tracing such

decisions as the masculinization of Church leaders back to the masculine ideal popularized by western narratives. Chapter Four contends Mormons' evolving sense of place as reflected in their relationship with and exploitation of Utah's land and waterways, reveals their belief that national belonging would come by selling the nation the idea that Utah was home to unique and iconic Western, and by extension, American landscapes. Finally, Chapter Five explores the historiography of Brigham Young and traces his public transformation from a polemic religious leader into a heroic American trailblazer and colonizer. This dissertation demonstrates that by establishing a western identity and rescripting their history, beliefs, and the lives of their leaders to fit within the parameters established by the Western narrative, Mormons exposed an avenue whereby they and other marginalized Westerners could gain cultural acceptance and a sense of national belonging when other traditional roads appeared closed. This dissertation, therefore, offers a more nuanced, more complicated picture of western history, Mormon identity, and the role of the American West in establishing a sense of national citizenship and belonging.

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CHAPTER 1

MORMONS, THE AMERICAN WEST, AND U. S. NATIONAL CULTURAL IDENTITY

In December 1907, George Albert Smith, an Apostle of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the grandnephew of church founder Joseph Smith Jr., and a cousin of then-church President Joseph F. Smith, quietly purchased a small farm near Palmyra, New York, just a few miles north of the Finger Lakes but thousands of miles away from the Church's headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah. The farm was quaint; a white, two-story farmhouse overlooked the property that included 135-acres of farmland, a variety of farm animals, a small pond, sheds, and barns. However, this was not just *any* farm. Ninety-one years earlier, in 1816, Joseph Smith Sr. had moved his family to this farm near Palmyra with hopes of forging a new beginning after a series of unfortunate financial setbacks. It was near this farm, in a grove of trees that Mormons today call "Sacred," that a young Joseph Smith Jr. claimed God the Father and Jesus Christ spoke to him, face-to-face, and commanded him to reestablish Christ's primitive church. It was within a log cabin on this property that Smith would claim he received heavenly visitations from an angel named Moroni, who instructed him of the location of golden plates buried in a nearby hill containing a record of the ancient inhabitants of the Americas. *The Book of Mormon,* Joseph's translation of this record, would first be published in Palmyra, New York, in March 1830. As opposition to Smith's claims and teachings grew, it was from this home Joseph Smith, Jr., and his followers would flee to Ohio in 1831, their first of multiple moves west.[1] And now, ninety-one years later, George Albert Smith and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were finally coming home.

The response from locals upon learning the Mormons were returning was anything but warm. Antagonism was strong, made worse by the contentious and highly publicized seating of Utah Senator (and, like George Albert Smith, Mormon Apostle) Reed Smoot that had concluded earlier in the year. According to one record, church officials referred to this area of New York as "the most prejudiced spot in the United States if not in the world."[2] After purchasing the property, the challenge for the Church was finding someone to oversee it, preferably someone with an excellent knowledge of church history and doctrine in order to correct misinformation. Church officials desired someone who was loyal to the church, its leadership, and its teachings, someone who, if possible, could arrange for the purchase of other Church historical properties, someone who was obstinate enough to withstand the barrage of hateful, anti-Mormon propaganda that awaited and yet amiable enough to befriend and convert the locals. In February 1915, President Joseph F. Smith hand-selected Willard Bean, previously a frontiersman and boxer, of Richfield, Utah, and his newlywed wife, Rebecca, to serve as missionaries and stewards over the Smith homestead in New York.[3]

The selection of Willard Bean to oversee the Smith farm provides a glimpse into the way Mormons sought to represent themselves and their Church, not just to the people of New York, but to the nation at large during the decades before and after the turn of the twentieth century. Willard Bean was by no means your *average* white-shirt-black-name-tag Mormon missionary popularized in today's popular culture. While a knowledgeable and fiery preacher, Bean was foremost an accomplished athlete, having exceled in track, tumbling, and football while a student years earlier at Brigham Young Academy. His true love, though, was for boxing and, according to newspaper accounts, he "won extraordinary acclaim as a boxer and physical trainer throughout the West" having "beat some of the best amateurs in the country and many of the crack professionals."[4] Bean opened a gymnasium in Salt Lake City where he trained, among others, a

young future heavyweight-boxing champion by the name of Jack Dempsey. As a young missionary in Tennessee in the 1890s, Bean's athleticism and boxing skills proved to be valuable tools for proselyting and protection. Once a group of bullies approached Bean and boasted, "We're gonna beat the hell out of you." After asking if the bullies minded if he "fight back," they laughed at the thought of a fighting preacher. The bullies attacked; Willard ducked and dodged their punches before knocking one of the men unconscious with a well-placed blow. After seeing their friend lying prone on the ground, the other fighters quickly fled.[5] On another occasion, a mob surrounded Bean, tied him to a tree, and began stripping him of his clothes in order to whip him with hickory withes. Bean called the men cowards, asking for the chance to defend himself. He boasted that, if freed, he would face off against the mob two at a time. The laughing mob agreed, untied him, and, two at a time, lunged at him. The first two attackers were reportedly leveled within seconds, followed by the next two and the next two. As the pile of attackers on the ground grew, the mob's ranks began to thin as people slinked away. Seeing this, Bean called out, "Don't run off now. Sit down and let me show you that I can preach even better than I can fight!"[6]

Bean's tenacity, aggressiveness, and fighting ability played an important role during his mission in Palmyra, New York, especially as he went on the offensive against Palmyra's prejudice and discriminatory practices. According to an account relayed by one of Bean's relatives, while walking down a neighboring street, a man, who was watering his grass, turned his hose on Willard and drenched him while saying, "I understand you people believe in baptism by immersion." Without missing a beat, Willard turned, leaped a fence, and coming face-to-face with the man replied, "Yes, and we also believe in the laying on of hands," a phrase used commonly as a threat of physical violence but, within Mormon circles, serves also as a reference to a religious ritual.[7] On another occasion, in an attempt to breakdown the cold-shoulder

treatment his family was receiving, Willard agreed to host a boxing exhibition. The community constructed a boxing ring in an old opera house and Willard offered an open challenge to anyone within the community to step into the ring and spar with him. On the night of the exhibition, the opera house was packed with spectators and brawlers. The first challenger entered the ring and was unable able to land a punch before Willard knocked him out. The fight lasted only a few seconds. As the first fighter was carried off the ring, Bean danced around, performing backflips and other gymnastic stunts as the second fighter entered the ring. He too lasted only a few seconds and, like the first fighter, had to be carried off the ring. This "exhibition" continued with Bean leveling every opponent within the first round. After the seventh boxer was knocked out, the eighth fighter declined Bean's invitation to enter the ring—as did all other would-be opponents. Not willing to concede the night and in an attempt to level the playing field, Bean drew a small circle in the middle of the ring with chalk and invited audience members to try to knock him out of the circle. While many tried, no one succeeded.[8]

The tide of oppression would eventually wane. Willard and his family would make friends in the community and earn respectability for themselves and their Church. Even citizens of the so-called "most prejudice place in the United States" would come to accept Bean's Mormon message. Church membership would gradually grow, so much so that, by 1926, Bean organized the first congregation of believers in Palmyra since Joseph Smith and the early Saints fled nearly one hundred years earlier.

In selecting a candidate to serve as the face of the Church in New York, someone whose personality would shine so bright that even in a storm of antagonism it could invoke curiosity, even celebrity, President Joseph F. Smith selected in Willard Bean a man who embodied the masculinity, individuality, and self-sufficiency celebrated in the heroic adventures of the mythologized West. His personal biography sounded as though it was lifted directly from the pages of a William "Buffalo Bill" Cody dime novel. Born on the American frontier in 1868 to a

one-armed farmer who worked as Indian interpreter, Bean enjoyed an adventurous childhood. Because of his father's frequent dealings with local tribes, Willard, or "Ka-Pu-Rats-Toats" (meaning "one-armed man's boy") as he was known to Indians, had many encounters with Native Americans. Most of these dealings were positive and Willard was especially respectful of his Indian friends' marksmanship with the bow and arrow. As he grew older and explored, Willard writes of numerous skirmishes with bands of Apaches and hostile Mexicans. For a short period, Willard even worked as cowboy, herding cattle until a federal law aimed at curbing polygamy transferred all of the church's property, including his 750 head of cattle, to the federal government. Like the cowboy of popular fiction, Willard was restless, especially as a teenager, always on the move, accompanying Church leaders on trips throughout Utah, Arizona, and Mexico. By selecting Willard Bean as the representative and face of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York, the Church was selecting more than just the man. Bean was a frontiersman, an Indian fighter, a cowboy, a boxer, and a symbol of the heroic West. By selecting Willard Bean, the Church was invoking the fabled history and heroic characters of the American West, setting this powerful narrative to work for their own political agenda of reshaping public sentiment in their favor. And just as the gutsy fabled cowboy, the Church and Bean chose to tackle the toughest battle first.

During much of the latter-half of the nineteenth century, western narratives describing the adventures of hardy mountain men, pioneers, and cowboys provided, according to historian Dan Moos, the "building blocks for a story of American exceptionalism and bolstered the immanence of a distinctly masculinist American Manifest Destiny."[9] The construction of this western identity did not occur overnight. Instead, the characteristics of western identity shifted and morphed in response to the racial, ethnic, and religious differences that dominated large swaths of the west. In the years following the divisive Civil War, the nation became obsessed with redrawing the boundaries of freedom by identifying those deserving and undeserving of the blessings of liberty.

In turn, the nation's political leaders used legislation to limit access of power to a narrowly defined social system defined by skin color, nationality, and religion: white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant.[10] The effect of this legislative agenda resulted in a further fracturing of American society along lines of class and race. Examples of societal splintering are numerous. For instance, when politicians nullified Reconstruction-era laws in 1877, newly freed slaves were forced back into positions of second-class citizenry that soon became codified by early Jim Crow laws. Five years later, in 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, using race for the first time to exclude an entire group of people from entering the United States and isolating thousands of Chinese workers in the West, including many who labored to complete the transcontinental railroad in 1869.[11] The Edmunds and Edmunds-Tucker Acts of 1882 and 1887 respectively, further isolated Mormons on account of their religious practices and, as historian Gustive Larson described, were "formulated not only to close loop-holes in earlier anti-polygamy legislation but to destroy the political and economic power of the Church which protected the practice."[12]

Like the Chinese Exclusion or Edmunds-Tucker Acts, the Dawes Act of 1887 singled out a marginalized minority group and subjected them to a harsh legislative agenda. The Dawes Act effectively transferred tribal land ownership from Native Americans to white ranchers and enterprising businessmen, pushing Native Americans further into isolation by relegating them to separate reservations. Even the 1896 Supreme Court decision in *Plessy vs. Ferguson* further alienated African-Americans by giving approval to a state law requiring separate facilities for blacks and whites. The effect of federal legislation in the second half of the nineteenth century regulated the ways in which ethnic, racial, and religious difference could—or could not—be incorporated into American culture.[13]

As many Americans embraced a more restrictive definition to identify who was—and was not—part of mainstream America, the challenge of establishing a homogenized ideal was

only exacerbated by rapid growth in industrialization, urbanization, and immigration. The years between 1890 and 1920, often referred to by historians and others as the "Progressive Era," was a transitional period in American history. The nation's abundant natural resources, growing supply of labor, expanding market for manufactured goods, and the availability of capital for investment made America a land of opportunity. Waves of new immigrants from southern and eastern European countries flocked to America's cities, seeking employment in the already cramped industrial centers of the North and Midwest. "Natives" fought back against the surge of "new immigrants" by constricting the boundaries of American citizenship even further. As historian Matthew Frye Jacobson observes in *Whiteness of a Different Color*, native-born Americans enforced racial distinctions that demarcated differences between "whites."[14] In other words, as Jews, Catholics, and Mormons as well as Irish, Italian, and many other eastern European immigrants discovered in the decades before and after the turn of the twentieth century, being white no longer granted an individual an automatic path for inclusion in mainstream American society.[15]

The challenge for minority groups, especially those living in the American West, to find inclusion within U.S. national culture was made more difficult after historian Frederick Jackson Turner delivered a landmark address at Chicago's Columbian Exposition in 1893. In his paper, "The Significance of the Frontier in the American West," Turner cemented the place of the American West into the official scholarly narrative of the nation, providing the theoretical lens through which American history would be interpreted for the next several decades. He argued the nation's identity—its character, ideals, and institutions—were founded on the existence of "free land," the need to develop this land, and the principles that grew from the process of acquiring and cultivating it. As he wrote, "The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explains American development."[16] Turner found in the American West the fundamental building blocks for American character and

democracy. Through the process of struggling against an unfamiliar natural environment and against non-European, non-White natives, men (women are notably absent in Turner's writing) built up civilization and acquired the habits, laws, and activities that became characteristic of American life in general. Ultimately, the character of the West, those aspects built through the process of pioneering, reflected back onto American identity and broadly informed the construction of American life. Turner's thesis also defined the frontier as the "meeting point between savagery and civilization . . . it lies at the hither edge of free land."[17] This definition demarcated binary roles for the peoples of the West: those who represented an American vision of good, the cowboys and frontiersman who pushed the line of civilization westward; and those who represented savagery, the Native Americans, Mexicans, Spanish, and any other group who inhabited the "uncivilized" lands and stood in the way of "progress."[18] With the closing of the frontier, American identity fused with the nation's geopolitical boundaries. To be American was, at the very least, to be within the boundaries.[19]

While the boundaries of Americanness shrunk and became less porous in the latter half of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, these restrictions did not keep African-Americans, Native Americans, the Irish, Catholics, Jews, homosexuals, or Mormons from attempting to gain admittance.[20] After gaining distinction through bravery and toughness in the Civil War, Irish Catholics sought inclusion through hard work, laboring to construct the nation's railroads and canals, and political control. The Irish formed a powerful voting-block by which they earned political power and control over municipal employment in major American cities, effectively clearing their path for acceptance in the American mainstream. Eastern European Jews possessed an unheralded combination of financial literacy, entrepreneurial drive, and faith in education whereby they distinguished themselves through rapid upward mobility and a tight-knit group consciousness. While some groups successfully and willfully merged with the American

mainstream, assimilation was not always voluntarily undertaken as is evident in the experiences of many Native Americans. In an attempt to "kill the Indian and save the man," American politicians sought to eradicate Native American identity and culture from the rising generation of native youth through forcing mandatory boarding school attendance and relocating native children into European-American homes. These youth were discouraged from communicating in Native languages or participating in Indian ceremonies. Their names were Americanized and their hair was cut short.[21] Such deracination was of course traumatic to the young recipients, yet what makes it even more horrifying in retrospect is that authorities acted in full confidence that the plan was beneficial. In short, the path for acceptance in the American "melting pot" was often steep, requiring an individual to "melt" away past ethnic or cultural affiliations and to adopt the customs, clothing, language, and foodways of the American mainstream.

Assimilating the Mormon "Other"

As the nation changed rapidly with heightened immigration and industrialization in the East, so too did the decades bridging the years 1890 and 1930 mark a period of momentous transformation for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, both within the institutional church and between the religious organization and the world outside of LDS-dominated Utah. After years of resistance to external forces, the Church, like many other marginalized groups of the period, began taking steps to accommodate the nation's demands by abandoning peculiar practices and embracing an "American" way of life.

Capitulating to national demands was extremely difficult for many members of the Church, who had endured decades of increasingly harsh treatment at the hands of the nation. Dating back before Joseph Smith officially organized the Church in upstate New York in 1830, those who subscribed to Smith's theological message were frequently victims of assault of some sort or another on account of their perceived religious, familial, economic, political, and even ethnic peculiarities or sense of "otherness."[22] Early persecutions came in the form of language, both in the written form and verbal assaults. Many anti-Mormon crusaders, including authors, politicians, and clergymen, unsettled by Smith's claims of modern revelation, a new Bible, or, eventually, the practice of polygamy, unleashed a storm of verbal attacks and print responses that caricatured, denounced, and, occasionally, correctly described what was taking place within Mormon communities. [23] After being forced out of New York and Ohio, the Mormons settled in Missouri where the persecutions turned extremely violent. In 1838, fearful of Mormons' economic and political cohesiveness and in response to the Saints use of violence against Missourians, Missouri Governor Lilburn W. Boggs issued the so-called "Mormon Extermination Order." Days later, a Missouri militia attacked the Mormon community at Hawn's Mill, killing at least seventeen, including children, assaulting the women, stealing livestock, and mutilating the

dead. Although the massacre occurred only a few days after Boggs issued the Extermination Order, most historians now believe the militia had neither time nor opportunity to have received word of the order and were responding to the perception of violence. [24]

Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum, were martyred in an Illinois jail in 1844. Mormons, under the direction of Brigham Young, fled westward to the safety of the Rocky Mountains. They blossomed in the West, constructing settlements up and down the Wasatch Front. However, despite their geographical isolation, the Saints found little respite. In 1851, four federally-appointed territorial officers abandoned their posts in Utah and returned to the East, leveling serious charges against the Mormons and proposing, among other things, the deployment of troops in the territory and the removal of Brigham Young and all other Mormons for territorial offices. While Mormons would survive this political and media firestorm, the suspicion of Mormon disloyalty would remain.[25] When another batch of federal officials fled the territory in 1857, President James Buchanan ordered twenty-five hundred U.S. soldiers to march on Salt Lake City, quell a supposed Mormon rebellion, and replace Governor Brigham Young with a federal appointee. Then, in an attempt to strong-arm Mormon faithful to fall in line with the ideals of Victorian America, the federal government outlawed polygamy in 1862 and thereafter passed increasingly punitive measures to suppress and then extinguish the practice of polygamy among Mormons. The Mormons remained resilient, refuting hostile legislation by arguing that polygamy was a religious practice protected under the First Amendment. The United States Supreme Court disagreed, ruling in 1879 that religious belief was not a valid criterion for challenging legal mandates. Congress consequently further tightened the screws, passing the Edmunds (1882) and Edmunds-Tucker (1887) acts, which dissolved the church as a legal corporation, forced the forfeiture of all church property over fifty thousand dollars, disfranchised all polygamists and ended female suffrage in Utah, and allowed the federal government to assume control over the territory's schools.[26] Mormons fed on the persecution, at times exaggerating their suffering, and

memorializing it in ways that only welcomed more of it. Persecution, in a way, became a "distinctive badge of membership," the predominant theme of political speeches, and a direct link to God's biblical "chosen" people.[27] But while this acknowledgement of their own persecution accentuated community cohesiveness, it did little to stem the anti-Mormon tide, much less to enhance the Mormon reputation in mainstream American circles.

Meanwhile, anti-Mormon attacks in the press escalated, stereotyping Mormon men as lascivious connivers and the women as exploited, uncultured commodities.[28] Representations of Mormonism, its leaders, and practitioners in political cartoons, literature, exposés, and newspaper articles were generally unfavorable. The few defenders of Mormonism confronted a fundamentally uneven playing field as they fought back. As historian Matthew J. Grow notes, the Anti-Mormon campaigners often "had access to mainstream periodicals, publishers, and pulpits, while the Saints could generally respond only through their own newspapers and pamphlets, which had much smaller circulations and were indelibly tainted because of their Mormon associations."[29] Occasionally, defenders of Mormonism would pen pro-Mormon letters and articles that would be published in popular national presses. These few publications did little, however, to slow the torrent of negative publicity or its marring of the public's perception of the Saints.[30] By 1890, the public image of Mormonism was largely controlled by representatives of the broadly defined American mainstream, from evangelical Protestants to popular fiction writers to women's groups to politicians who used Mormonism as a touchstone for many debates on what Americans should—and, importantly, should not—be.

In September 1890 Wilford Woodruff, prophet and president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, officially ended the practice of polygamy in the Church. This was a major event for Mormons and mainstream Americans alike, marking the transition into a new phase in Mormon history.[31] Beginning with Woodruff's Manifesto, over the next forty years

leaders of the Mormon Church charted a course to reposition the Mormon institution and its membership from their spot among the periphery of American ethnic and religious groups into the American mainstream. Within this transitional period for the church, often referred to as the "Great Accommodation," the nation set forth terms in which they would accept Mormonism, and Mormonism began to conform to those terms.

As historian Thomas Alexander argues in his insightful overview of the Mormon Church in the early twentieth century, many of these changes were *institutional*, directed by the church leadership in an attempt to shape the Church to be more acceptable to the American mainstream. In fact, most scholars who have written about the "Great Accommodation" have focused on these *institutional* changes, referred to by James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard as "inspired accommodations," or using Leonard Arrington and David Bitton's phrase, "creative adjustments."[32] Among these institutional adjustments, scholars have identified the abandonment of polygamy,[33] the adoption of a pluralistic political system,[34] the rejection of group economics in favor of competitive individualism,[35] the standardization and centralization of Church administration,[36] the restructuring of Mormon hymnody,[37] the formation of a public relations department,[38] and the creation and missionary mission of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.[39] While these institutional directives are important as they reflect a shift in the ideological perspectives and approaches in the upper-most echelons of the Church, what remains neglected are the ordinary experiences of the men, women, and children who were forced to confront daily public discrimination, humiliation, and cultural segregation on account of their religious beliefs.

In this dissertation, I reveal one of many strategies implemented by these individuals to foster national acceptance and to transition socially, culturally, and religiously into the mainstream *outside* of the official strategies of the institutional Church. In the same way that the Church in 1915 selected in Willard Bean a rugged, violent, and masculine cowboy to represent

the Church in New York, so too will everyday Mormons seek inclusion into mainstream American national identity by employing the rhetoric, symbols, images, icons, landscapes, and characters popularized in the mythic narratives of the American West in order to reimagine their public image to better accommodate American political, economic, social, and religious trends. It is these moments, these "reimaginings," when a desperate people took desperate measures to accommodate an unaccommodating populace, I interpret in this dissertation.

The Politics of Identity in the Mythologized American West

The decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century were an ideal time for Mormons to capitalize on their western image. As the challenges associated with modernization—namely, industrialization, urbanization, and immigration—intensified during these years, America's love affair with the mythologized West blossomed. Even before painters like George Catlin, Karl Bodmer, Albert Bierstadt, and Frederic Remington captured America's imagination with their depictions of the jagged mountains, big skies, and wide-open spaces of the West, the West symbolized, as historian Donald Worster writes, "the true promise of American freedom." For immigrants forced to abandon their cultural and ethnic identities upon arriving on America's eastern shores, the American West represented a place where difference was suppressed for the sake of an imagined national cohesion. For others, especially those living in squalid and cramped urban conditions, the openness of the West promised escape. Without the physical restraints that accompanied modernity, the West embodied the freedom, according to Worster, "made possible only by the dry air, the short grass, and the horizon running off to infinity."[40] Others imagined the West as a "safety valve" of sorts, providing abundant land and a temporary reprieve from the institutional controls associated with industrial labor whereby an individual or family could seek out an economically, politically, and socially more fulfilling life.[41] Above all, the West embodied hope. It promised to make all Americans the masters of their own destinies.[42] This back-and-forth process whereby the East consumed and imagined images and ideas provided by the West solidified the cultural relationship of both regions to each other. This process meant that what happened in the West mattered to the East, and vice-versa.

These diverse images of the American West—the land of abundance, freedom, and escape—reflect the dreams, fears and anxieties that Americans grappled with near the turn of the twentieth century. Within the American imagination, the West, home to heroic cowboys and

villainous Indians, would become the *site* whereupon the tensions that threatened to destabilize American culture—as cultural historian Richard Aquila summarizes, the tensions that accompanies the formation of a modernized nation such as those that exist between "civilization and wilderness, the past and present, realism and nostalgia, and, ultimately, between good and evil"—would be realized and solved once and for all.[43] The abundance and freedoms of the West would solve America's problems. However, this imagined West was not a physical location but a concept, a byproduct of popular culture, or a fictitious site wherein, as American studies scholar Richard Slotkin notes, ". . . Americans could imagine (or observe others imagining) the basis for a new (or renewed) cultural consensus on the meaning and direction of American society."[44]

The earliest vestiges of this imaginary American West that became commercialized in popular culture may be found in pre-nineteenth-century folkloric and popular writings, including almanacs, magazines, broadsides, histories, diaries, journals, sermons, and pamphlets, though no one popularized the genre as did James Fenimore Cooper in his Leatherstocking Tales: *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), *The Pathfinder* (1840), *The Deerslayer* (1841), *The Pioneers* (1823), and *The Prairie* (1827).[45] The Leatherstocking Tales introduced to audiences Natty Bumppo, Cooper's vision of a quintessential frontier hero, whose action-packed adventures involved Indians, villains, and daring rescues. As historian Roy Harvey Pearce explained in his description of Bumppo, "At the center of the Tales is neither a savage nor a civilized man, but rather Natty Bumppo, Leatherstocking, somewhere between savagism and civilization, the 'beau ideal' of the frontiersman, with all the goodness and greatness that the pioneer could have in the circumstances of pioneering. Yet even he, no Indian, is steadily pushed westward until he dies on the prairies; and the progress which makes for his death is known ultimately to be good."[46]

Cooper's work inspired many others to situate their creative works in the American West, patterning their heroes after Bumppo. Western explorers published popular guidebooks,

narratives, and reports of their travels and adventures. Authors of popular literature, penny press newspapers, magazines, journals, and dime novels provided gaudy western tales for public consumption. Painters like Catlin, Bodmer, Bierstadt, Remington and others reinforced public attitudes towards the West through their popular paintings of Indians, cowboys, landscapes, and other images of the mythic West. Photographers like William Henry Jackson attracted the attention of large audience with their images capturing the majesty, grandeur, and sublime landscapes of the West. After gauging the popularity of these paintings and photographs, Currier and Ives began selling Western-themed lithographs, bringing images of the West to millions of Americans. Even the work of public entertainers like William "Buffalo Bill" Cody located the significance of their presentation in the adventures of the American West and the individuality, masculinity, and violence of its conquerors. His Wild West show centered around his experiences on the frontier as a tracker, soldier, and buffalo hunter and featured cowboys, Indians, sharpshooters, stagecoach holdups, shoot-outs, buffalo hunts, and other thrilling events synonymous with the West.[47]

From the work of these men and many others grew a popular narrative that positioned an assortment of colorful, heroic, western characters—cowboys, Indian fighters, gunslingers and frontiersman—against the forces of evil—Indians and lawless criminals. So popular were these narratives, argues Slotkin and others, they became mythologized and displaced the realities of the West with a more heroic idealized vision of the West.[48] As American studies scholar William Goetzmann displays at length in *The West of the Imagination* and *Exploration and Empire*, the settlement of the west produced experiences that were avidly consumed back east, generating in turn more demand for more western stories, art, and information – as well as land.[49] Thus, history in the West should not be seen as occurring beyond the pale of eastern vision, but rather as the object of eastern vision, and the subject of eastern imagination.

This western narrative became, as American studies scholar Priscilla Wald writes, one of America's "official stories," a powerful tool for fashioning, channeling, and reflecting a national vision and, ultimately, the identity of its citizens. Popular culture situated in the west provided the metaphors and symbols, the heroes and villains, whereby Americans understood, explained, and justified the limits of American cultural nationalism.[50] Clear character demarcations allowed consumers to associate specific races, ethnicities, gender, and religions as "heroic," "civilized," or "normal" and others as "villainous," "barbaric," or "other." To be within this narrowly defined boundary of American identity was to be at least white, male, and Protestant. Official stories, like the western narrative, command great authority within society; they define individual rights and privileges and reflect the culture of the nation. In short, if, as Wald writes, "official stories constitute Americans," then they also determine who or what *does not* constitute Americans. [51]

Within the Western narrative form, Mormons fell outside of the heroic vision of the West. Although Mormons lived on the edge of the frontier and were composed primarily of converts of northern and western European descent (i.e. the 'civilized regions of the world') and thus fit the physical requirements of the heroic frontiersman, Mormons were often depicted in popular culture as villains because of their foreign or "barbaric" beliefs and practices, polygamy being the chief examples. As previous discussed, in popular literature and dime novels, Mormon men were often cast in villainous roles that exaggerated their lasciviousness and ethnic-otherness.[52] As such, Mormons occupied a figurative "no man's land" in this strict narrative formula, having the physical characteristics and social tools of civilization but choosing not to use them. Wherein Cooper's Natty Bumppo had his feet firmly planted in both extremes, as both savage and civilized, and was idealized for it, Mormons are ridiculed. As neither heroic cowboy nor villainous Indian, Mormons were atypically dangerous, even ambiguous—the wolf in sheep's clothing—physically able to blend in with the rest of society yet possessing characteristics that

were detrimental and downright dangerous. However, rather than being helplessly victimized and villainized by popular culture, Mormons recognized within the western narrative an opportunity to alter their public image. By capitalizing on the roles available to them, as pioneers, cowboys, or noble savages, Mormons found a way to attach themselves to the western narrative and rewrite themselves past the racial, ethnic, and religious barriers directly *into* the heart of American national identity.

The idea of an “official” narrative or mythos provides scholars with a valuable theoretical framework for interpreting the power of hegemonic official culture in forging national consensus and unity. More interesting, however, as a number of recent historians have demonstrated, this framework allows scholars to explore the strategies implored by culturally marginalized Americans to incorporate the terms of a national or “official” narrative that was, at the core, oppressive to them. For instance, in her book, *Constituting Americans*, Patricia Wald finds in the writing of literary giants evidence of distress as they wrote within the structural confines of the national narratives. In writing, these authors, including Frederick Douglass, Herman Melville, Harriet Wilson, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Gertrude Stein, felt restricted by the national narrative, “not enjoying full authorial liberty” to tell their stories—stories that deviated in content from the expectations of the national norm. As Wald argues, these writers conformed to the literary boundaries of the national narrative, whereby acknowledging its superlative power, but hid relics of their stories in plain sight within the narrative—“as unexpected words, awkward grammatical constructions, rhetorical or thematic dissonances.”[53] Complicating Wald’s thesis, Dan Moos, in his book, *Outside America,* examines the ways African-American, Mormon, and Native American literary figures in the early twentieth century, understanding the limits and roles of the national narrative, constructed their own narratives by assigning marginalized minority characters with heroic traits. This act of subversion allowed previously marginalized groups to attach themselves to American history in more favorable terms.[54]

While these scholars locate the subversion of official culture only within the literature of marginalized groups, in this dissertation I argue it was much more prevalent. In fact, both the institutional Mormon Church and its grass-root membership often invoked their connections to the West, especially during the years of the so-called "Great Accommodation" between 1890 and 1930, as a strategy for restructuring their public image, rewriting their past, and capitulating to the terms of American national identity. To be clear, this was not the only strategy Mormons implemented, having also invoked their ethnicity, their Christianity, and their hyper-Americanness to appease the American mainstream. With that being said, in this dissertation, I argue that Mormons embraced the rhetoric and symbols of the mythical Western narrative that accentuated Mormon characteristics that most overlapped with American identity, thereby offering the nation a vision of Mormonism that was heroic, quintessentially American, and, ultimately, more in line with the Mormon vision of itself. At and around the turn of the century, as the nation embraced an identity established upon the ideals of unencumbered progress, individualism, freedom, self-sufficiency, and self-improvement, all characteristics promoted in the narrative of western expansion, Mormons believed that recognition as an American westerner would best aid them in inclusion in the national body.

Subverting "Official" Culture

The stories we tell as a nation are axiomatically important. They capture our imagination, serve as a source of entertainment, and provide an outlet for momentary escape from the hustle and grind of everyday life. The stories we share reflect our values, our dreams, and our anxieties. When taken as a whole, the stories we share often mirror the different political and cultural visions and social and political roles that constitute our understanding of the boundaries of national cultural identity. Our stories rarely remain static; the settings, characters, and morals change with time, reflecting the shifting demographics, values, and ideological perspectives of the storytellers. This is just as true today as it was one hundred years ago.

As I contemplated the task of cobbling together this story of the ways Mormons used the stories of the past to rewrite their past, present, and future, I found most helpful the writing of Michel Foucault and his ideas of discourse in recognizing how such a multiplicity of ideas and practices could fit together. By discourse, Foucault was referring to (and I borrow here from Gail Bederman) "[the] set of ideas and practices which, taken together, organize both the way a society defines certain truths about itself and the way it deploys social power."[55] At its core, discourse theory is most interested in the formation of power, in the relationships between those with and without power, and the methods those relationships are expressed through practices, language, and symbols—such as the official narrative. Because both intellectual ideas and material practices exert power to mold, enforce, and undermine relationships of power within a society, Foucault's methodology treats both equally.

Foucault's discourse theory also assumes, as Benderman writes, "that these ideas and practices that compose any discourse will be multiple, inconsistent, and contradictory."[56] The existence of a variety of voices reaffirms the hotly contested and controversial nature of discourse. The western narrative did not exist in a vacuum, void of other powerful, competing

narratives, nor did Mormons solely rely on this narrative-type to rewrite their identity and history. But the existence of contradictory methods for acculturation does not weaken this thesis as much as it provides evidence of the reality of this discourse, its significance, and its power to define relationships. In addition to pro- and anti-Mormon crusaders waging a highly publicized war for control of the image of Mormonism by offering up fundamentally contradictory views of the Church and its followers, the institutional church reaffirmed some and altered other Mormon practices and beliefs by which believers would be known to others. Furthermore, Mormons, in their daily interactions with others, will use a variety of responses to represent themselves in ways that accommodate the expectations, interests, and desires of others. One of these responses was the invocation of western narrative rhetoric, symbols, and characters to work in their behalf. Another response was to define the west culturally as Mormon. Hence, the significance of an expansive "Mormon Culture Region" which appears to be western but is based upon Mormon social practices.

In her book, *The Anatomy of National Fantasy,* Lauren Berlant describes the "National Symbolic," a term closely related to Foucault's discourse, as a "tangled cluster" of official texts—icons, metaphors, heroes, rituals, and narratives—that mediates a national "public" and "transforms individuals into subjects of a collectively-held history."[57] This "National Symbolic" creates a sense of belonging and identity within its citizens (again recognizing the inherent relationship struggle between those with and without power) by connecting them with this "tangled cluster" of national identifications. This does not mean that the "National Symbolic" is unchanging. To the contrary, beneath the surface of a nation's official texts is a contested hotbed of a multiplicity of competing voices, representing various factions, ideologies, and opinions, each seeking recognition, acceptance, and even supremacy within the nation. But of these competing voices, few obtain the level of wide-spread acceptance requisite for obtaining the authoritative power of an official text.

Lastly, the existence of a variety of voices denotes, as Benderman writes, "a particular emphasis on human agency and the possibility of intentional change." In part due to the contradictions that exist within and between discourses, Foucault's methodology allows for individual agency, as people bend discourse for their own purposes. Thus Mormons, finding themselves cast as outsiders within the prevailing western narrative, choose to bend the discourse to allow for variations that include them as heroic, quintessential Americans.

I recognize that in making sweeping claims about the existence of national consensus or national consciousness (at any point in history) that I am venturing out onto a pockmarked academic battleground. In the 1960s and 1970s, scholars critical of the "myth and symbol" school in American studies attacked the works of Henry Nash Smith, Leo Marx, R. W. B. Lewis and others, whose scholarship made generalizations about the American character and national consciousness from a broad representative sample of texts. While I side with Bruce Kuklick and the other critics of the "myth and symbol" school, their critique has tended to, as Miles Orvell recently observed, "simplify the methodology of these writers and set up a prohibition against synthetic narrative."[58] In subsequent years, scholars of American studies have distanced themselves from the methodology of the myth and symbol school, abandoning sweeping generalizations in favor of case-by-case explanations. In using the terminology of an official narrative or a national symbolic, I am *not* assuming the existence of a collective mentality shared by all races, ethnicities, classes or genders that compose the United States. However, I *am* assuming the existence of signs and symbols, packed with meaning, created by American tradition and mass media that members of American society are familiar with and understand their meaning, even if they do not share the values these signs and symbols represent. As Orvell writes, "there is a commonality of knowledge, though not necessarily a community of values." It is of this shared "commonality of knowledge," one about the American cowboy and the imagined

West, that I argue is a universal symbol representing specific values, beliefs, and characteristics that is recognized and understood by Americans as part of a shared common culture.

Finally, a word about this dissertation's place among the ongoing study of the American West. In the years following the publication of Patricia Nelson Limerick's groundbreaking *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* in 1987, a new brand of western historian, appropriately calling themselves the New Western Historians, arose, heeding Limerick's challenging to revive the study of the West from a "conceptual fog."[59] By celebrating the voices from the West that have traditionally been silenced or ignored, these historians have extended the scope of historical discourse to more closely reflect the demographic make-up and history of the conquest of the West. Instead of imagining the West through Frederick Jackson Turner's prescriptive "Frontier Thesis," which understood the frontier as the dividing line between civilized and savage and the genesis of American exceptionalism, as had been done from several decades, the New Western Historians called into question the intentions and assumptions of earlier historians by confronting the notion of Manifest Destiny, disputing European-influenced ideas on wilderness, free land, native peoples, and complicating the western narrative by introducing the experiences of the marginalized—including Native Americans, Mexicans, Asians, African-Americans, homosexuals, and women. In so doing, a new, tragic history replaced the hope-filled, triumphant one. The important work of scholars like Limerick, Richard White, William Cronon, and Donald Worster has shaped our understanding of the power structures of the West, environmental issues, the legacy of conquest, and the role of marginalized people in the building-up of the American West, providing evidence enough of the value of their theoretical perspective.

However, in their quest to free us from this "conceptual fog" and to abandon all remnants of or connections with Turner's Triumphalist West, the New Western Historians have too often ignored the cultural power entrenched within the western narrative. In their reinterpretation of the

past, the once-celebrated traditionalist narratives have been pitted against the silenced narratives of marginalized peoples. In so doing, the New Western Historians have overlooked the empowerment that the western narrative offered even for those people for whom the mythical narrative was not originally intended and often were those very marginalized peoples that the myths sought to subdue. Ironically, it is these marginalized peoples—these very same people who refashioned the western narrative for their own purposes—that the New Western Historians are hoping to empower through their revisionist account of the American West. Tragically, as they try to undo the mythic West through the dismissal of its terms, they neglect the reality of the myth itself. Yes, New Western Historians have rightfully overturned the Triumphalist narrative, but, in doing so, they have, as one scholar writes, "lost sight of the enduring cultural power of a myth that continues to circulate, even when emptied of content."[60] By fighting back against the bulwark of the old school, the New Western Historians ignore some of the very voices they claim to want to give voice to.

As inexcusable as the tenets of western pioneer identity may be (to New Western Historians), some western outsiders, including Mormons, espoused elements of western mythology in complicated ways that they believed might offer them the advantages of western subjectivity. Mormons came to believe that their identity—not religious, but as American westerners—was critical to obtaining national cultural citizenship, especially after recognizing that legal, political, and ethnic paths proved to remain closed. By invoking elements of the mythical western past, Mormons complicate our understanding of the process of assimilation, a process which scholars for long examined through the lenses of race, gender, class, consumerism, and imperialism. Thinkers in other fields, such as Carl Gustav Jung and the generations of psychologists and psychiatrists who follow his model, recognize that stories, myths, and archetypes retain great power and relevance above and beyond the issue of their technical accuracy. In that spirit, I suggest that exploring the nuanced usage of the pioneer archetype by

Mormons is a key way to gain new insights into the process of negotiation and acculturation that went on on both sides of the Mormon-mainstream divide.

To demonstrate the power of this mythology at work among the Mormons, I have organized this dissertation to highlight specific historical moments or thematic trends. Chapter 2, "(Re)Structuring the Mormon Image: Nationalism, Imperialism, and Violence in the 1897 Pioneer Jubilee," examines the planning, organization, and implementation of the 1897 Utah Pioneer Jubilee, a celebration set a year after Utah received statehood yet surprisingly did little to celebrate that crowning event. Instead, as I argue, by choosing to celebrate the pioneer, both those living survivors of the 1847 trek and as a symbol, the Jubilee Commission, charged with overseeing the event, sought to represent the post-polygamous Church and its members to the nation through the popular lens of the Western narrative, as heroic pioneers and trailblazers of America's Manifest Destiny. By utilizing the symbols and rhetoric of the Western narrative, the Commission cobbled together a weeklong celebration that presented a heroic Americanized vision of Mormon past and present.

In Chapter 3, "Men with the Bark On": Mormons, the Western Narrative, and the Construction of a Masculine Mormon Ideal," I examine the issue of Mormon masculinity in the decades directly before and after the turn of the twentieth century. Between 1890 and 1920, Mormon leaders recognized a crisis developing in the lives of their men as changes stemming from America's modernization and the Church's accommodation to popular economic, social and moral views challenged the traditional standards by which masculinity had been constructed, measured, and understood within the Church. In response to these challenges, Mormon leaders established a new masculine image of Mormonism for its male members to exemplify, using a variety of methods including the masculinization of Church leaders, both past and present. Using stories of these leader's lives not widely circulated among Church members and print publications like the Church-owned *Improvement Era* and *Juvenile Instructor*, this new image of

Mormon masculinity stressed characteristics common in the American masculine-ideal like courage, physical strength, and toughness. The overlapping of Mormon and American visions of masculinity provided an additional avenue for the establishment of shared cultural bonds through the heroic vision promoted by the Western narrative.

In Chapter 4, "The Politics of Place in the Construction of Mormon Identity, 1847-1920," I analyze the ways Mormons appropriated the land and waterways of the West for their own political, religious, and economic gain. By examining Mormons' evolving sense of place in relationship to their physical surroundings, I trace their transformation as they negotiated new religious and cultural identities in their efforts to reconcile their relationship with the United States. Mormons believed, I argue, that if they could sell the nation the idea that Utah was home to American landscapes, then they could prove their value and promote their Americanness to America.

Within Chapter 5, "The Americanization of Brigham Young from a Mormon Prophet into an American Colonizer," I explore the historiography of Brigham Young between the time of his death in 1877 and 1940. During these decades, Young's image underwent a dramatic transformation from a polemic, polygamous, religious leader into an American trailblazer and heroic figure. As I examine the evolving characterizations of Young as presented in biographies, journal articles, newspaper articles, opinion pieces, novels, films, and political cartoons during these years, I note how Mormons reimagined the life and accomplishments of Young as they refashioned him into a Western American hero using the framework established by the mythical Western narrative. I argue this deliberate rewriting of the past shaped the way Young was understood by the American public and allowed for his gradual acceptance by Western historians as the American Colonizer of the West.

Finally, before moving into the bulk of this project, a short word on my relationship with this topic. I am reminded of a quote from John F. Kennedy, who, while a Presidential candidate,

was questioned about his religious background and whether he would be able to objectively fulfill the responsibilities of the Office of the President. Kennedy responded that he was not the "Catholic candidate for president but the Democratic Party's candidate, who happens also to be a Catholic."[61] Similarly, some readers may take interest in my religious background, supposing my membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints hinders my ability to write objectively about Mormonism. To those critics, I would echo Kennedy: I am not a Mormon historian but a historian who happens to be Mormon. I am well-aware of the benefits and pitfalls of my dual-identity as both practitioner and scholar. Certainly, my membership in the LDS community has given me the type of access to documents, experiences, and insights that an outsider cannot easily obtain. But, I am not so heavily enculturated within the community that I am blind to critical aspects of my culture. To the contrary and as both the topics and analysis that follows in this dissertation demonstrates, I have not shied away from aspects of Mormon history that are negative, embarrassing, or uncomfortable for other Mormons to discuss. In the end, this is not a dissertation about religious belief but one about American identity and the steps a minority people took to become the version of themselves they felt the American mainstream was most willing to accept.

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[1] For more on anti-Mormon rhetoric and Protestantism's rejection of Mormonism, see Spencer Fluhman's "*A Peculiar People": Anti-Mormonism and the Making of Religion in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

[2] Willard Washington Bean, *Autobiography.* MSS SC 1529. L. Tom Perry Special Collections Library, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 103.

[3] For more information about the life of Willard Bean, a typewritten copy of his *Autobiography* including news-clippings from his time in New York, is available in the L. Tom Perry Special Collections of Brigham Young University's Harold B. Lee Library (Provo, UT), MSS SC 1529. From this account and from personal papers in the author's possession, Vicki Bean Topliff, a descendant of Willard Bean, has compiled a biography, *Willard Bean: The Fighting Parson: The Rebirth of Mormonism in Palmyra*. Copies are available from the BYU Library or through purchase at http://www.willardbean.com. David F. Boone's article "'A Man Raised Up': The Role of Willard W. Bean in the Acquisition of the Hill Cumorah" provides an academic overview of Bean's life and his contributions in building up Church property in an often hostile

environment. Rand H. Packard's *A Lion and a Lamb* (Provo, UT: Spring Creek Book Company, 2007) provides a concise history of the Beans' experience in Palmyra, New York. Finally, Vicki Bean Zimmerman published a short historical piece through the Mormon Church's magazine, *The Ensign*, entitled Willard Bean: Palmyra's 'Fighting Parson,'" (June, 1985), also available online at http://www.lds.org/ensign/1985/06/.

[4] As quoted in Vicki Bean Topliff, *Willard Bean The Fighting Parson: The Rebirth of Mormonism in Palmyra* (Orem, UT: n.p., 1981), 6.

[5] Vicki Bean Topliff, *Willard Bean The Fighting Parson: The Rebirth of Mormonism in Palmyra* (Orem, UT: n.p., 1981), 9.

[6] Ibid, 16.

[7] Ibid, 9.

[8] Ibid, 77.

[9] Dan Moos, *Outside America: Race, Ethnicity, and the Role of the American West in National Belonging* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2005), 2.

[10] Ibid, 2.

[11] Arnoldo De Leon, *Racial Frontiers: Africans, Chinese, and Mexicans in Western America, 1848-1890* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002); Charles J. McClain, *In Search of Equality: The Chinese Struggle against Discrimination in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1994).

[12] Gustive O. Larson, "Federal Government Efforts to 'Americanize' Utah Before Admission to Statehood," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (1970): 225.

[13] For more on ways white Protestant Republicans narrowed the racial, class, and religious boundaries of the nation in an attempt to establish unity during Reconstruction, see Edward J. Blum, *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism, 1865 – 1898.* (Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 2007).

[14] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998) 39-91.

[15] Much has been written in support of the claim that Mormons of the nineteenth century represented a "separate race." In 1857-58, Assistant Surgeon Roberts Bartholow of the U.S. Army, who marched to Utah from Fort Leavenworth as part of the "Utah War," made a report of his observations of the "new race" of Mormons. He writes, "The yellow, sunken, cadaverous visage; the greenish-colored eyes; the thick, protuberant lips; the low forehead; the light, yellowish hair, and the lank, angular person, constitute an appearance so characteristic of the new race, the production of polygamy, as to distinguish them as a glance. The older men and women present all the physical peculiarities of the nationalities to which they belong; but these peculiarities are not propagated a continued in the new race; they are lost in the prevailing type." Surgeon General's Office, *Statistical Report on the Sickness and Mortality in the Army of the United States . . . From January, 1855 to January, 1860* (Washington, D.C.: George W. Bowman, 1860) 301-302. As quoted in Givens, *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) 136-137. Given's chapter, from which the above is taken, entitled "'They Ain't Whites . . . They're Mormons:' Fictive Responses to the Anxiety of Seduction," provides an excellent overview of the transformation of anti-Mormon rhetoric from their being a political threat to their being a racialized Other. Finally,

W. Paul Reeve's book *Religion of a Different Color: Race and the Mormon Struggle for Whiteness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015) consider ways Mormons were racialized in the nineteenth century, which suggests Mormon struggles were not merely political, but also social and cultural struggles for whiteness.

[16] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" and Other Essays*. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994), 31.

[17] Ibid, 32-33.

[18] Of the Mormon experiences in shaping the West, Frederick Jackson Turner reserved only four words in his famous Frontier Thesis, locating the edge of the frontier in "the settlements of Utah." I support, in part, Patricia Nelson Limerick's argument that Turner's omission of Mormon contributions to the settlement of the West was due to the Mormon's "tightly knit social bonds and communitarian behavior" which did not support Turner's argument of the self-reliant, individualist American pioneer. I would also contend that his omission is representative of the larger trend to marginalize Mormons as religious, cultural, and ethnic "others," who, despite creating "settlements," are not civilizing the West. On account of religious practices like polygamy, the Mormons are, in fact, adding to the barbarism or savagery of the West. See Patricia Nelson Limerick, *Something in the Soil: Legacies and Reckonings in the New West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000), 239-240.

[19] Dan Moos, *Outside America: Race, Ethnicity, and the Role of the American West in National Belonging* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2005), 3.

[20] As Terryl L. Givens notes, writers and artists of Mormons in the nineteenth century often included references to other non-American ethnic groups, "driving home the point that Mormons were but one more alien culture, undeserving of political or social toleration in an age characterized by economic and social tensions." Givens, *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 48. Gary L. Bunker and David Bitton find a similar trend in the periodical illustrations of the same era, often linking Mormons to Irish, Catholics, African-Americans, Chinese, and Native Americans. Bunker and Bitton, *The Mormon Graphic Image, 1834-1914: Cartoons, Caricatures, and Illustrations* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983), 75-94.

[21] For more on the assimilation of Native Americans, see Frederick Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001); David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995).

[22] Sociologist Thomas O'Dea argues the Mormon community was viewed as quasi-ethnic. Therefore, when non-Mormons disagreed with their religious practices or doctrines, Mormons were labeled as Others and the community implored conventional attack methods against them as a homogenous body. Thomas F. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (1956; repr., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970). R. Laurence Moore complicates this reading. Moore argues that the labelling of Mormons as Other was a two-sided affair with Joseph Smith imploring "deliberate strategies of differentiation," especially by "employ[ing] a rhetoric of deviance to describe himself and to elaborate the institutions of his church." R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) 32-34. For contemporary scholarly reflection on O'Dea, see also Cardell K. Jacobson, John P. Hoffman, and Tim B. Heaton eds., *Revisiting Thomas F. O'Dea's The Mormons: Contemporary Perspectives* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2008).

[23] Important studies of the Mormon public image include Terryl L. Givens, *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Jan Shipps, "From Satyr to Saint: American Perceptions of the Mormons, 1860-1960," in her *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years Among the Mormons* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000); Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), and Matthew Grow, "Contesting the LDS Image: The North American Review and the Mormons, 1881-1907," *Journal of Mormon History* 32, 2 (Summer 2006), 111-138. Older studies include David Brion Davis, "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47 (September 1960): 205-24; Leonard J. Arrington and Jon Haupt, "Intolerable Zion: The Image of Mormonism in Nineteenth-Century American Literature," *Western Humanities Review* 22 (Summer 1968): 243-60; Charles A. Cannon, "The Awesome Power of Sex: The Polemic Campaign against Mormon Polygamy," *Pacific Historical Quarterly* 43 (February 1974): 61-82; Lester E. Bush, "A Peculiar People: The Physiological Aspects of Mormonism, 1850-1975," *Dialogue* 12 (Fall 1979): 61-83; Gary L. Bunker and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Graphic Image, 1834-1914: Cartoons, Caricatures, and Illustrations* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983); and Gregory Pingree, "'The Biggest Whorehouse in the World': Representations of Plural Marriage in Nineteenth-Century America," *Western Humanities Review* 50 (Fall 1996): 213-32.

[24] See William G. Hartley, "Missouri's 1838 Extermination Order and the Mormon's Forced Removal to Illinois." *Mormon Historical Studies* 2 (2001): 6.

[25] For more on the lead-up to the federal officers clash with Brigham Young and the national fall-out, see Ronald W. Walker and Matthew J. Grow's excellent two-part article "The Affairs of the "Runaways": Utah's First Encounter with the Federal Officers, Part One" and "The People are 'Hogaffed or Humbugged': The 1851-52 National Reaction to Utah's 'Runaway' Officers, Part Two" in *Journal of Mormon History* 39, no. 4 (Fall 2013) and 40, no. 1 (Winter 2014).

[26] Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002) 147-181.

[27] R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) 25-47. See also R. Laurence Moore, "Insiders and Outsiders in American Historical Narrative and American History." *The American Historical Review* 87 (2) April 1982. 399-401.

[28] See Gary L. Bunker and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Graphic Image, 1834-1914: Cartoons, Caricatures, and Illustrations* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983)

[29] Matthew J. Grow, "Contesting the LDS Image: The 'North American Review' and the Mormons, 1881-1907." *Journal of Mormon History* 32. 2 (Summer 2006), 112.

[30] Leonard J. Arrington, "Mormonism: View from Without and Within," *BYU Studies* 14 (Winter 1974): 148, described the Mormons response as a "continuation of hard-sell missionary work and the distribution of a few tracts which answered in a straightforward way the charges of our enemies." For a study of the attempts of one Mormon newspaper—George Q. Canon's San Francisco-based *Western Standard*—to defend Mormonism against other newspaper attacks, see Roger Robin Ekins, ed., *Defending Zion: George Q. Cannon and the California Mormon Newspaper Wars of 1856-57* (Spokane, Wash." Arthur H. Clark Co., 2002).

[31] Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890 – 1930*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986) 3.

[32] James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971); Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979).

[33] Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of A New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985) 109-129; Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002)

[34] Gustive O. Larson, "Federal Government Efforts to "Americanize" Utah Before Admission to Statehood," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (1970): 218-232; Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979) 247-249; Robert Gottlieb and Peter Wiley, *America's Saints: The Rise of Mormon Power* (New York: Putnam, 1984); Armand L. Mauss and M. Gerald Bradford, "Mormon Politics and Assimilation: Toward a Theory of Mormon Church Involvement in National U.S. Politics." In *The Politics of Religion and Social Change*, ed. Anson Shupe and Jeffrey K. Hadden (New York: Paragon House, 1988) 40-66; Kathleen Flake, *The Politics of American Religious Identity: The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot, Mormon Apostle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

[35] Leonard J. Arrington and Thomas G. Alexander, *A Dependent Commonwealth: Utah's Economy from Statehood to the Great Depression* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1974).

[36] Klaus Hansen notes in the Epilogue to *Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967) that the LDS political establishment eroded into a powerful, centralized Mormon Church. Robert Gottlieb and Peter Wiley, *America's Saints: The Rise of Mormon Power* (New York: Putnam, 1984); F. R. Johnson, "The Mormon Church as a Central Command System," *Review of Social Economics* 37 no. 1 (1979), 79-94. The effort to assimilate is also reflected in the Church's auxiliary programs, including the adoption of social welfare programs into the women's Relief Society, the establishment of the Mutual Improvement Association for the youth, and the almost immediate adoption of the Boy Scout program in 1913 is noted in Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890 – 1930*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986) 125-156 and Richard Ian Kimball, *Sports in Zion: Mormon Recreation, 1890-1940* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

[37] Official hymnbooks borrowed liberally from mainstream Protestantism during this period and the words of many hymns were softened in tone. See Michael Hicks. *Mormonism and Music: A History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989) 128-151,

[38] See Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986) 239-257.

[39] Michael Hicks' chapter, "The Mormon Tabernacle Choir," in *Mormonism and Music: A History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), places the Choir's formation within historical context of the Church's attempt to improve its public image. See also Reid L. Neilson, *Exhibiting Mormonism: The Latter-day Saints and the 1893 Chicago World's Fair* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011) for an overview of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir's second-place

showing at the fair and the successes of the choir's national and international performances in reshaping public perception of the Church.

[40] Donald Worster, *Under Western Skies: Nature and History in the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 83.

[41] David M. Potter, *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1954), 142-166; Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" and Other Essays*. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994).

[42] For more discussions on the changing meanings of the West in American history see Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, MA: University of Harvard Press, 1970), 17, 32, 45, 52, 81, 123-124, 142, 247; Ray Allen Billington, *The Far Western Frontier, 1830-1860* (New York: Harper & Row, 1956), 85-88; Frank Bergon and Helen Zeese Papanikolas, *Looking Far West* (New York: American Library, 1978), 1-14, 59-139, 191-237, 239-342.

[43] Richard Aquila, ed., *Wanted Dead or Alive: The American West in Popular Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 3.

[44] Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 24

[45] For more on the folklore of the American West, see Richard M. Dorson, *American Folklore* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), chap. 1.

[46] Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 201-202. As quoted in Richard Aquila, ed., *Wanted Dead or Alive: The American West in Popular Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 5-6.

[47] For an excellent overview of the various meanings of the West in the American imagination, see William H. Goetzmann and William N. Goetzmann, *The West of the Imagination* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009). For more on William "Buffalo Bill" Cody's life and the significance of his show in shaping American views of the West, see Joy S. Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular Culture* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000); Thomas L. Altherr, "Let 'er Rip: Popular Culture Images of the American West in Wild West Shows, Rodeos, and Rendezvous." In Richard Aquila, ed., *Wanted Dead or Alive: The American West in Popular Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 73-104.

[48] Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).

[49] William H. Goetzmann and William N. Goetzmann, *The West of the Imagination* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009).

[50] My understanding of the role of the American West in defining the boundaries of Americanness were influenced by my reading of Dan Moos, *Outside America: Race, Ethnicity, and the Role of the American West in National Belonging* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2005), 4-7; William G. Robbins, *Colony and Empire: The Capitalist Transformation of the American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994), 4-7; and Priscilla Wald, *Constituting Americans: Cultural Anxiety and Narrative Form* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 2-5.

[51] Priscilla Wald, *Constituting Americans: Cultural Anxiety and Narrative Form* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 2.

[52] To read more on roles given Mormons in the popular literature of the nineteenth century, see Terryl L. Givens, *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 97-152.

[53] Priscilla Wald, *Constituting Americans: Cultural Anxiety and Narrative Form* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 1.

[54] Dan Moos, *Outside America: Race, Ethnicity, and the Role of the American West in National Belonging* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2005), 1-17.

[55] Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 24.

[56] Ibid, 24.

[57] Lauren Berlant, *The Anatomy of National Fantasy: Hawthorne, Utopia, and Everyday Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 4, 5, 20.

[58] Bruce Kuklick, “Myth and Symbols in American Studies.” *American Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (1972): 435-450. Miles Orvell, *The Death and Life of Main Street: Small Towns in American Memory, Space, and Community* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 25.

[59] Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987), 24.

[60] Dan Moos, *Outside America: Race, Ethnicity, and the Role of the American West in National Belonging* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2005), 11.

[61] John F. Kennedy, “Speech to the Houston Ministerial Association.” Houston, TX. September 12, 1960.

CHAPTER 2

(RE)STRUCTURING MORMON PIONEERS AS AMERICAN HEROES: NATIONALISM, IMPERIALISM, AND VIOLENCE IN THE 1897 PIONEER JUBILLE

The struggle for Utah's statehood, an ordeal beginning shortly after Brigham Young and the first wave of Mormon pioneers entered the Salt Lake Valley in 1847 and lasting nearly fifty years until statehood was granted in 1896, was fraught with unforeseen challenges that required Mormons to abandon religious practices – most notably, plural marriage, or polygamy – and make major accommodations to the main currents of American social and political thought. Between the years 1849 and 1887, Mormon representatives petitioned Congress six separate times for statehood. Each application was rejected, during a period when the progress from territorial status to statehood was, for other places, quite efficient. The list of states admitted while Utah's bid languished runs from California, the 31st state, through Wyoming, the 44th. Thus, when, on January 4, 1896, the Saints learned President Grover Cleveland had signed the proclamation making Utah the 45th state, they erupted in celebration. Nearly fifty years after its first petition, Utah and the Mormons finally had the national recognition and legal protection it so long and desperately desired.

When the superintendent of the Western Union office received the announcement via telegraph, he rushed out into the street with shotgun in hand and fired two shots into the air, starting a celebratory frenzy that would continue throughout the day.[1] Photographs show Utahans, dressed in Victorian black, swarming the streets, cheering beneath patriotic American flags draped from windows and buildings. In Salt Lake City, a battery of the Utah National Guard marched to the top of Capitol Hill and there, on the summit overlooking downtown, fired a

twenty-one gun salute. The occasion was so momentous to James E. Talmage, then a professor of geology at the University of Utah who would later rise through the ranks of Church leadership, that he recorded in his journal the exact time that he learned of the news: 8:04 a.m. Talmage also made note of the eruption of sound that accompanied the announcement: "the news was welcomed by the firing of cannon and small arms, the shrieking of steam whistles and every other kind of noise which could be produced."[2] Sixty-miles south, in the Mormon settlement of Payson, Saints celebrated "with the booming of anvils and fire arms, the ringing of church bells, and blowing of steam whistles." Within minutes, said one newspaper, even a drum corps had assembled and joined the Saints, "discoursing stirring music" along Main Street.[3]

At the Salt Lake City and County Building four days later, newly elected Utah Governor Heber Wells addressed the state legislature for the first time. During his address, Wells called for lawmakers to approve a bill that would allocate funds for the hosting of an "Inter-Mountain Fair." Drawing upon the recent financial, social, and cultural successes of American fairs in previous years in Chicago (1893) and San Francisco (1894), Wells envisioned an event far grander in scale and significance than the meager state fairs of past years. The "Inter-Mountain Fair," Wells estimated, would be the world's largest exhibition since the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition and the largest celebration west of the Mississippi River ever.[4] The fair would open its gates to the citizens of the world. There, between the shores of the Great Salt Lake and the peaks of the Wasatch Mountains, Mormons would demonstrate through exhibits, special events, and parades, the greatness of Utah and the transformations made during its first fifty years. The fair would reflect the state of Utah's, and by extension, Mormonism's, cultural progression into ideal stewards of America's social, economic, and democratic traditions.

In his address, Wells called for the "Inter-Mountain Fair" to celebrate, not Utah's recent acceptance into the Union—as the timing might suggest—but instead the "fiftieth anniversary of

the arrival of the Utah Pioneers in Utah."[5] Coming on the heels of such a significant and long-sought- after event like statehood, Wells' decision to memorialize the early pioneers is significant because it provides insight into the ways the post-polygamous Church planned to navigate its relationship with the rest of the nation. Instead of continuing to antagonize the nation through stubbornness and, at times, malicious rhetoric, beginning with the issuance of the Woodruff Manifesto, the Church began a deliberate campaign to assimilate into the American mainstream. In hindsight, while it is easy to designate the Woodruff Manifesto as the point of demarcation separating Mormon periods of widespread antagonism from assimilation, in reality the break was not this clean. For example, even after Manifesto, on occasion the Church would continue to lash out, especially from the pulpit, at the federal government. Nonetheless, as this dissertation demonstrates, an examination of the "Inter-Mountain Fair" provides a microcosmic glimpse into one of a variety of ways the Mormon Church sought inclusion into the fabric of America's national identity between the years 1890 and 1930.[6]

Of course, not every thought or action by the Saints, either individually or collectively as a Church between 1890 and 1930, is reflective of this push towards greater accommodation or assimilation. As Gail Bederman articulates, "the ideas and practices comprising any discourse will be multiple, inconsistent, and contradictory" and this very multiplicity allows human agency to embrace or contend the discourse to their "own purposes."[7] In fact, as some have argued, the actual choice of celebrating Brigham Young and the pioneers into the Salt Lake Valley signifies a continued stubbornness by the Church, in this case, an act of counter-subversion, whereby Mormons undermined the significance the nation placed on statehood by honoring the year 1847, not 1896, as the important founding date of the state.[8] I contend, however, this decision was not intended to antagonize President Cleveland or officials in Washington D. C., nor to undercut the value of statehood. In fact, statehood was welcomed with joy and brought Utah the self-

governance, political representation, and promise of legal rights that could protect the Saints from future outside meddling in the domestic and religious affairs of the Church. It was appreciated less for the message of acceptance by mainstream American institutions than for the formal protections it offered the Church and people. At the same time, though, many in Utah could not shake the rightful insight that the federal government had long tried to bully Church leaders into compliance.[9] Thus, by using the occasion of statehood to honor Mormon pioneers, Mormons sent a powerful yet nuanced message to the nation, that while they would, when necessary for their survival, capitulate to popular demand, they would never abandon the central focus of their religious and ethnic identity as religious pioneers. Pioneer values of courage, self-sufficiency, and individualism embodied by the first settlers in Utah demonstrated the core of Mormon self-image, belief and practice. Instead of interpreting the events surrounding the fair as an act of defiance, I will argue in this chapter that this event was a positive action of group solidarity, meant to honor Mormon heritage. It was also a venue that provided the Saints with the "tools"—the events, merchandising, and print publications—necessary to further promote aspects of their Western identity to each other and to their fellow American citizens.

Through this scholarly lens, the fair is best understood as a stage whereon Mormons offered the nation a new public image for the post-polygamous LDS Church, an image centered on the pioneer, which in the previous few decades had become quintessentially American and a powerful symbol of American national identity. As many scholars have demonstrated, throughout most of the nineteenth century, control over the Mormon public image had been held by non-Mormon groups—particularly representatives of the broadly defined American mainstream—who imposed an unfavorable identity upon the Saints. Polygamy was merely the most famous example of a Mormon issue which church opponents could spin negatively in their effort to cast the entire church in a bad light. In political rhetoric, newspaper accounts, political cartoons, and popular literature, Mormons were depicted as lascivious, deceitful, and as radical Others.[10] In hosting the

1897 fair, Mormons seized an opportunity to counter these grossly bigoted misperceptions by offering an alternative, positive reading of their history, one that would reflect what they felt was their rightful place in the American saga. While it is true that statehood extended the boundaries of national identity around Utah, marking the state and its people as "acceptable," Mormons wanted the nation to understand that they had long been "acceptable" Americans. From a Mormon perspective, their pioneer phase came about because they were wrongfully chased out of the United States by intolerance, and persecution. But the central point was that Mormons were not suddenly good American material because of the new interpretation of the marriage issue. Instead, they had always been so. Their experience of fleeing to a place of refuge in order to defend their religious beliefs and cultural practices was to be presented as a proud development firmly within the best American traditions. Even though they were admittedly a "peculiar" people with strange beliefs, customs, and practices, they believed these peculiarities only enhanced dimensions of their Americanness. In fact, so blinded was the nation by the issues of polygamy and political normalization, they failed to notice the Mormons for what they were and had been all along. By inference, it was the nation which had failed to recognize Mormons' essential Americanness, until recently. To make this point clear, throughout the planning and implementation of the fair, Mormons adopted the rhetoric and symbols of a narrative form popular in America at the turn-of-the-century to tell their story in a format and with characters recognized by the nation at large as prototypically American.

Through the 1897 Inter-Mountain Fair, or as it came to be known, the Utah Pioneer Jubilee, Mormons attempted to restructure their public image away from the persecuted outsider to a people who most embodied an American pioneer sensibility. They needed to do this without sacrificing their own version of their past, which certainly did not include the interpretation that they were a savage people who needed to adapt to American practices in order to enjoy the graces of civilization. Having abandoned their most controversial practices, Mormons believed that by

incorporating the rhetoric and symbols of the mythical Western narrative that most overlapped with American identity, they could offer the nation a vision of Mormonism that was heroic, quintessentially American, and, ultimately, more in line with the Mormon vision of itself. At the turn-of-the-century, as the nation embraced an identity founded upon the ideals of self-sufficiency, individualism, self-improvement, freedom, and unencumbered progress, all traits featured heavily in the narrative of western expansion, Mormons believed that recognition as an American westerner would aid them in inclusion in the national body.

Constructing the Jubilee

After the Jubilee's announcement and an initial appropriation of $5,000 in April 1896, seven months passed before Governor Wells appointed ten leaders from the community to serve on the Jubilee's planning commission. As an omen of events to come, immediately, planning hit a snag. Out of the initial men and women, four refused the nomination, citing prior commitments, commuting distance, or the inability to give proper attention to the needs of the fair.[11] Those who accepted took the oath of office in late November. During their first meeting, they elected Spencer Clawson, a local businessman from Salt Lake City and half-brother to Rudger Clawson, the first practicing polygamist to be convicted and serve a sentence after the passage of the Edmunds Act; Ernest G. Rognon, a lawyer also from Salt Lake City, to act as Secretary; and Inez C. Wallace, one of three women serving on the Commission, to serve as Treasurer.

Meeting for the first time only eight months before the proposed start of the Jubilee, the six-member commission had to make many important decisions quickly: When would the fair be held? What would it be called? What would people do? After soliciting ideas from the public, Chairman Clawson and the commission decided the celebration would be called "The Utah Pioneer Jubilee" and would bring together the citizens of the nation to celebrate surviving members of the "First Company"—those pioneers who arrived in the Salt Lake Valley during 1847.

With a general theme selected, the basic outline of the fair's presentation began to take shape. All events of the Jubilee would be designed to honor these early pioneers, "to illustrate their courage, patience and faith; to testify to their lofty character; to record their illustrious achievements, and to tell in a realistic way the story of how they planted first on this side of the Missouri the civilization which gradually unfolded, through their influences, over the western third of the United States."[12] Thus, from the earliest planning stages, we can see that the

commission constructed an event designed to tell a particular story. In this story, the Mormon pioneers would play leading roles in the reenactment of the conquest of the West. The demand that the events be realistic in their depiction stresses a need for authenticity. While events like Buffalo Bill's Wild West show were known to take liberties aplenty with their depictions of reality, even when using actual participants such as Sitting Bull as actors in their productions, such exaggerations proved unnecessary for the Mormon pioneers—their real-life experiences exceeded expectations. The Commission outlined several events that would constitute the heart of the Jubilee, including the erection of a monument in honor of Brigham Young and the pioneers, the distribution of a gold medallion to the surviving pioneers or their family, parades that would float by representing different stages in the development of the state, and the construction of a "Hall of Relics" to house original pioneer artifacts.[13]

During these early meetings, the six members of the committee realized additional help and funds would be required to make these lofty plans a reality. The Commission petitioned Governor Wells for help. On January 12, 1897, a little over a year after announcing the event, Wells stood before the Utah legislature and recommended the appropriation of an additional $10,000 to the Commission. However, the fever of patriotism that accompanied statehood and imbued the legislation was now gone, replaced by more durable feelings such as reluctance to make appropriations. Representatives hesitated to approve such a significant sum, especially to an event that appeared to lack a plan to recuperate taxpayer investment. To further complicate the issue, initial public sentiment for the Jubilee, so enthusiastic during statehood's first glow, had atrophied. Many Utahans opposed the "wanton waste of building perishable floats and the sin of investing in such transitory amusements as fireworks."[14] That portion of the public that was not critical, felt Commission member Horace Whitney, "was indifferent."[15]

While meeting with the legislature, the Commission insisted that in addition to a sentimental side, there would be a business side to the Jubilee. This decision, to commercialize

the festivities, was a harbinger of fairs to come. As cultural historian Michael Kammen notes, "Whereas most pageantry in the Progressive era had primarily been prompted by municipal pride and the desire to demonstrate community cohesion in the face of increasing social pluralism. . ." fairs between 1915 and 1945 were "more likely to have commercial and promotional purposes."[16] Plans were made to incorporate performances, concerts, sporting events, and other revenue-producing activities into the Jubilee plans—providing entertainment to customers, income to local businesses, and a percentage of admission costs back to the state. By assuring members of the legislature that their financial concerns were unfounded and then threatening to cancel the event all together, members of the Commission secured the passage of a bill. On March 11, 1897, during the closing moments of the session, Utah's Congress passed a measure allotting the Commission with an additional $10,000 and expanded its board from ten members to fifteen. The fifteen men and women were Spencer Clawson, Inez Wallace, Reed Smoot, H. H. Spencer, W. A. Nelden, Emily Katz, Cora Eldredge, Ernest Rodnon, Edward Colborn, William Preston, Jacob Moritz, John D. Spencer, Elias A. Smith, Mrs. R. C. Easton, and Horace G. Whitney.

With the appropriation of funds, the Commission was able to commence construction work, long delayed by budgetary constraints. But with an estimated $50,000 price tag, the Commission required additional donations from the public. The finance committee made appeals through public prints, circulars, and letters, soliciting subscriptions on both a local and national level with little to no success. With public interest low, the Commission approached business leaders, arguing that from a business standpoint, "the Jubilee would be a good thing and that strong financial and moral support would be forthcoming from every portion of the State."[17] Despite the pleas, subscriptions remained low. Discouraged and behind schedule, the Commission began talks on dismantling the fair, believing "it would be better to end the unequal struggle by returning their commissions to the Governor and recommending the abandonment of the Jubilee." The fair, they feared, would be a "certain fiasco" and would "disgrace and humiliate

the people of Utah."[18] Now, the fair's backers had to assuage fears that, instead of a significant memorialization that would properly contextualize Utah's founding and relation to the United States, the event might be an expensive fiasco.

In early June, only weeks before the Jubilee's scheduled start, a mass meeting was held in the Salt Lake Theater. Local leaders including Hon. B. H. Roberts, Hon. O. W. Powers, and members of the Commission, "warned the people of the danger of failure and pointed out the disgrace that would thereby come to the State."[19] With the Governor and other business leaders canvassing the streets, the promises of financial donations began trickling in and the construction and planning of the Jubilee moved forward—fully funded.

Promoting the Jubilee

Some of the first attempts to depict Mormons as heroic characters from Western narratives can be found in print publications like advertisements and the Jubilee's official invitations. With local interest in the fair nearly non-existent throughout most of the planning months and unable to find donors, the commission looked outside the Mormon cultural region for financial assistance and the promise of visitors. Technological advancements within the world of publishing and the rapid growth of an urban audience during the post-Civil War years produced a boom in the cheap-literature business. This was the age of the so-called Penny Press, as well as the telegraph. Fast information, printing and distribution were suddenly feasible and cheap. These developments also made affordable the mass production of newspaper advertisements and colorful lithographs.[20] It is worth pointing out that the technological advances doing so much to usher in the age of mass communication across the United States and world were no less influential in Utah. Using print publications, the Jubilee Commission promoted aspects of the fair that would catch the interest of the nation. By examining the language and images used in these publications by Mormons to describe themselves, we can see how members of the Church promoted to others a heroic imagine of Mormon pioneers as characters of America's western progression.

Through advertisements and other print publications, fair organizers shaped the narrative by which the nation would understand and interpret the fair's events. It is significant then, that these publications embraced the symbols and tropes of the mythologized Western narrative. Through these elements, the organizers depicted Mormon pioneers as the very embodiment of the American ideal. Though their journey into the West was inspired more out of a necessity to escape the persecutions and violence that plagued their relationship with neighbors and less out of a desire to expand the geographical boundaries of America's Manifest Destiny, these publications

skirt the truth of that reality. Instead, the story of the Mormon pioneers was rescripted to fit the structural requirements of the Western narrative and to make it more satisfactory and thus more appealing to the nation. As outlined by Richard Slotkin in *Gunfighter Nation*, these structural requirements included three aspects. First, the Western hero needed a "separation" from his native home into a more primitive land. Second, during this journey, the hero would experience an evitable "regression" back into primitive conditions as he fought to reclaim the wilderness for civilization. During this process of regression, the hero would experience the third requirement, "conflict," either in a struggle against an "unfamiliar natural environment" or against the "non-European, non-White natives." Through this conflict, often violent in nature, the hero would experience a "regeneration" of sorts, back into civilization.[21] Therefore, as I will describe below, the printed publications created by and for the Pioneer Jubilee highlight a recasted memory of the pioneers, one exaggerating those characteristics idealized in popular Western narratives that would enable Mormons to argue for their inclusion in the American mainstream.[22] We can see at work the reciprocal nature of West-East communications, in a specifically Mormon context.

In early 1897, Governor Wells dispatched a delegation of local political and judicial leaders, including Hon. George Q. Cannon, Justice George Bartch, Hon. P. H. Lannan, Senators Frank J. Cannon and Joseph Rawlins, and Representative William H. King, to Washington D. C. to present newly elected President William McKinley with a personalized invitation to the Pioneer Jubilee. Officials believed that President McKinley's presence would signal to the nation a new era of acceptance of the Church and provide the state, its people, and the Jubilee with a much needed (for financial if nothing else) stamp of endorsement.[23]

Using language that emphasized the wildness of native peoples and landscapes and dramatized the Mormon role in settlement, in his letter to the President, Governor Wells

described the early pioneers, not as religious exiles but as American colonizers, patriots, and explorers, trailblazers who extended the boundaries of American civilization westward. He wrote:

> On the twenty-fourth of July, 1847, the Pioneers of Utah first entered the valley of the Great Salt Lake. This land then belonged to Mexico, and was a forbidding desert, inhabited by no white man, but roamed over by Indians and wild beasts. These Pioneers had fought their way through the wilderness more than a thousand miles beyond the western frontier, and one of their first acts upon arriving here was to erect upon a mountaintop overlooking this valley the ensign of liberty, the glorious Stars and Stripes. They were therefore more than the founders of Utah they were the conquerors of arid America, the forerunners of Western civilization, the envoys of the United States in the acquisition of a new and mighty empire.

In his depiction of the pioneer's journey, Wells emphasizes both their separation from society and their experiences with conflict. Each phenomenon had endured for half a century – a veritable Mormon 'Errand into the Wilderness.' By describing the pioneers as travelling not just to the edge of the western frontier, but "more than a thousand miles beyond," Wells underlines a sense of isolation from civilization's influence. The land they chose to inhabit was wild and uncivilized, home to "Indians and wild beasts," and far removed from the comforts of the East. Most importantly, the journey took Mormons outside of America's geographic boundaries and into neighboring Mexico, a people often depicted in Western narratives as a villainous impediment in the Westward struggle. Hence, the pioneers found conflict with both the unfamiliar natural environment represented by the "forbidding desert" and with the native peoples and beasts. As I will demonstrate later in this chapter, the supposed conflict with the indigenous Indian peoples allowed Wells through his narrative to construct an artificial boundary between identities of civilized/uncivilized and Mormon pioneer/Indian. The Indians "roamed" the desert, the supposed wilderness, and thus, as the original savage inhabitant, fulfilled the foil of villainous Other to the heroic pioneer.

It is worth noting the absence of religion from Wells' account. Again, he seems intent on stressing the contributions of the pioneers in terms of American nationalism, imperialism, and

progressivism. Thus, by capturing the very moment pioneers place an emblem of America upon the mountaintops of the West, Wells masks the true purpose of the pioneer journey behind a shroud of nationalistic expression. Instead of religious exiles, the pioneers became heroic figures, "conquerors," "forerunners," and "envoys of the United States in the acquisition of a new and mighty empire."

Accompanying the Governor's message, the six-member delegation offered a memorial meant to provide further details of their purpose in traveling to Washington. Like Wells' letter, the delegation's message stressed the hardships and suffering endured by the early pioneers in order to further the cause of American democracy and civilization. The delegation described the pioneers' regression into primitive conditions along the journey and while conquering the land. They were described in the most pitiful and tragic of terms. "Naked," and "in despair," they "blazed a weary trail from the Missouri River." The journey was difficult and many were buried along the way. When they arrived in the valley, they found no respite from the suffering. Their land of promise was full of symbols of desolation—a desert and a Dead Sea. Civilizing the wilderness would be no easy task and the odds of survival were not in their favor. "For years," the delegation described, "[the pioneers'] yokemates were poverty and hardship, their lot unceasing and poorly requited toil." "If songs were in their souls," they wrote, "they were never sung." And yet, through it all, the pioneers did not complain. In true Horatio Alger "rags-to-riches" fashion, they bore up their burdens, demonstrated pluck and depended upon fortune. Through conflict with the unnatural environment, "acre by acre," they gained their promised land from the western wastes. But through it all, LDS pioneers retained the values of self-sufficiency, self-improvement, and resilience. They were "strong men and delicate women" who dedicated their lives to progress, foregoing the dreams of their youth and willingly suffer depravity for the betterment of their family's and the nation's future.

Tragically, these heroic figures and sources of national pride were dying off, as the letter described, "one by one [they] fell out until now only a remnant of the band remains." The Jubilee was needed to show:

> . . . how the frown of desolation was chased away; how the smiles of civilization were warmed into life in Utah; how the waters of the streams, turned aside from their natural channels, gave life to the soil; how, at the miner's summons, the sterile mountains opened their adamantine doors and brought forth their jewels until Utah became one of the first mining states; how, in the waste, temples of religion, to education, to order, and to law were upreared; how the toilers, while subduing the wilderness, subdued at the same time their own prejudices, until, when Statehood came, it was greeted by a people loving, as loyal, as true and as devoted to our free institutions as ever lived.[24]

To honor those still living and the memories of those dead, the Jubilee would tell the story of the pioneers' regeneration back into respectable Americans. This, too, can be read as a quintessentially American demonstration of nostalgia for the living relics who briefly connected the contemporaneous world to founders' glories. Just as Richard Bushman demonstrates in *From Puritan to Yankee*, the living descendants could now honor their aged predecessors. The formula repeats itself in American generational history, most recently with the favor directed at World War II's 'Greatest Generation.'

McKinley responded favorably to these invitations, but cited powers outside his control that precluded his attendance. The President did not feel comfortable leaving Washington while Congress was in session. "I should be sorely tempted to accept if Congress were adjourned." The delegation returned to Utah, so confident in their chances of having a Presidential visitor, that advertising headlines read, "President McKinley Coming." An example of this confidence can be seen in the May 12, 1897 edition of *The Pony Express*, a weekly newsletter edited by Jubilee Commission member Edward Colborn sent to citizens of neighboring states. Colborn confidently wrote:

> It is almost an assured fact that President McKinley will visit Utah during the Pioneer Jubilee. . . . As good judges of congressional legislation have declared that the work of the present Congress will be finished early in July, the people of

> Utah may, with every assurance of not being disappointed, prepare to receive and royally entertain the nation's Chief Executive during the week of the Jubilee.[25]

Elsewhere, the official invitations and letterhead designed for use with the Pioneer Jubilee provided colorful depictions of the colonizing of the West. Designed by Utah native James Harwood, one of the first Utah-born artists to study art in Paris, the letterhead painting, called "Dream of the Pioneer," carefully blends aspects of impressionism and realism to depict a moonlit scene in which a pioneer is fast asleep upon the prairie ground (See Figure 2-1). In the background, symbols of the journey and of the West are prominently featured. The trail landmark known by pioneers as "Chimney Rock," stands silhouetted against the darkening sky. A wagon train forms a circle along the banks of a river, surrounding the dying embers of a fire while horses and oxen graze nearby upon the uncultivated prairie. In the distance, coyotes disturb the silence with a wild howl. From the pioneer's smoldering fire, smoke clouds reveal an image of the pioneer's dream—a promised city built through sacrifice and labor. In this vision, a new day breaks as the red, orange, and yellow rays of sunlight dispel the darkness of the uncivilized, unlearned, and uncultivated, bringing enlightenment to the West. The sun reveals a thoroughly modern community nestled along the shores of an expansive lake. Smoke disrupts the serene morning scene, billowing up from symbols of industry and modernity, factories and locomotives, suggesting that, despite the early hour, citizens are already hard at work. Electrical lines run along the railroad, spreading power throughout the valley.[26]

Figure 2-1. James Harwood's "Dream of the Pioneer"

Weeks before the opening of the celebration, a lithograph invitation was sent to all Cabinet officers, Senators of the United States, members of the diplomatic corps in Washington, Governors and principal officers of the States, editors of leading journals, and to other distinguished citizens of the country. The lithograph contained an open letter surrounded by four familiar scenes depicting modes of travel used to traverse the landscapes of the American West: the Wagon, the handcart, the stagecoach, and the horseback rider of the Pony Express. These scenes also depicted distinctive eras in the development of the West, arguably initiated by the early Mormon pioneers. Like the description of the pioneers offered by the delegation in Washington, this invitation ignores the religious motivations of the pioneers, instead focusing on the danger, hardship, and toil encountered along the road: "In the awful solitudes of the Wasatch these Pioneers dedicated their lives to the redemption of the wilderness. Undeterred by destitution and hardship, they uncomplainingly toiled-and toiling, saw their dominion widen year by year

until the arid valleys changed their dead hues for those of green and gold."[27] Of those invited, William Jennings Bryan did attend and was greeted with much fanfare.

The 1897 Utah Pioneer Jubilee

At sunrise, on the morning of July 20, 1897, surviving members of the Nauvoo Legion kicked-off the Utah Pioneer Jubilee by firing their cannons in a ceremonial national salute. As the cannon fire echoed throughout the valley, Utah's first pioneers, their families, and spectators from across the nation began making their way from home, hotels, and train stations into the heart of Salt Lake City to pay tribute to the estimated 650 aged pioneers who had first entered the Salt Lake Valley in 1847.[28] Over the course of the next four days, visitors to the Jubilee would see these pioneers honored through song and theatrical plays, through monument and building, through advertisements and souvenirs, through hand-crafted floats and living recreations. Through these events, the symbol of the pioneer stood as a both a humbling reminder of days past and an ensign of a promising future. The fair's events blurred the line between fact and fiction, real and imagined, promoting Mormon pioneers into heroic figures. In so doing, Mormons and non-Mormons alike, found a common ground, a common history, a common symbol in the pioneer, upon which future relationships and paths to assimilation could hinge. They also had fun together, which carried real and transformative social power, even if that is difficult for the modern scholar to quantify.

On the first day of the Jubilee, the surviving pioneers gathered at Old Fort Square, near the spot where the first camp in the valley was made, and then, accompanied by two brass bands, slowly made their way up Third and East Temple streets to the intersection of Main and South Temple, where a monument honoring Brigham Young and the pioneers would be unveiled with great public celebration. As they marched through the city, the pioneers spread, as the *Salt Lake Tribune* described, "an infection among the thousands of spectators. As the head of the column came into view hats were torn from the heads of people along the streets and in upper-story windows and handkerchiefs fluttered one wave of welcome." Despite the advanced age of the

pioneers, not one dropped out on account of fatigue, slowly pressing forward as they had years earlier. When they arrived at the monument, speeches were given by Brigham Young Jr. and C. C. Goodwin, the editor of the *Salt Lake Tribune*. Afterward, President Woodruff, the oldest living pioneer, clutched the rope attached to the American flag that was draped over the monument, and in a loud voice proclaimed, "Attention: In the name of God, I unveil this monument!" As the banner slowly fluttered to the floor, the battery on Capitol Hill fired off more shots and the audience erupted into celebration.

The bronze monument of Brigham Young was massive, approximately twenty-five feet tall, including a base and shaft constructed of native granite. On the front and rear were two bronze tablets. The tablet on the south side was inscribed with the message: "In honor of Brigham Young and the Pioneers." The tablet on the north side included the names of those who composed the original company on pioneers that entered the valley with him. Sculpted by C. E. Dallin of Utah, the statue of Brigham Young was originally constructed for display at the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition at a cost of $35,000. It was donated to the state, which determined its permanent resting place near the Salt Lake Temple in the very center of the city. Of course, statuary in a city or town center is immediately recognizable to any big American cities such as Washington, D.C., or New York have their heroes in stone, but so, too, do small villages north and south, where a cenotaph and a Yankee or Rebel soldier are often the pivot point of a town square. In Salt Lake City, Brigham Young was invested not just with his Mormon memorialization, but with a 'typically American' memorialization, too.

As fair-goers waited for the afternoon public reception to begin, many walked the patriotically decorated streets to look at souvenirs. Many of these souvenirs featured pioneer images interlaced with familiar national and local symbols. Personal values like industry also featured prominently into many of the souvenirs, both as a reminder of the pioneer work ethic but also because such traits were understood as valued American traits. One of the souvenirs

spectators could purchase was a small, copper commemorative coin that intermixed Mormon symbols of a beehive and a swarm of bees with the national symbol of the eagle. The symbols of the beehive and the swarm of bees represent collectivism, unity of purpose, and industry. It also represents the “sweet results of [Mormons] toil, union, and intelligent cooperation.”[29] The blending of purely Mormon symbols with American national symbols served to connect in the buyer’s mind the idea of Mormonism and American patriotism. Elsewhere, some vendors carried a limited-edition commemorative cup, specially commissioned from a manufacturer in Vienna. These cups, like the coins, were decorated with Mormon religious symbols, Utah state symbols, and American national symbols. The cup depicted scenes from the American West of yester-year, featuring images of the buffalo herd and the Indian village, both vestiges of a bygone era that had been vanquished by the never-ceasing onslaught of America’s Manifest Destiny, symbolized in the images of the wagons, oxen, pioneers, and handcarts (See Figure 2-2).

Figure 2-2. “Pioneer Jubilee Commemorative Cup”

No other souvenir was as costly or beautiful as the golden badges presented to the surviving pioneers. During an afternoon ceremony that included the reading of a prize-winning poem honoring the pioneers, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir performing the pioneer anthem "Come, Come, Ye Saints," and a speech by B. H. Roberts, each pioneer received a golden medallion, designed and crafted by Tiffany & Co. of New York.[30] Surrounding the central image of Brigham Young, the badge featured four literal and symbolic images of Utah and the West: a beehive, an emigrant wagon, the pony express, and the locomotive. Each of these images were separated by a large bee with outstretched wings. The back of the badge was inscribed with the message "Presented by the State of Utah to [recipient's name], Pioneer of 1847" (See Figure 2-3).

Figure 2-3. Pioneer Jubilee Medallion.

In honoring the pioneers, many of the Jubilee's events exaggerated the circumstances and conditions of their journey or took creative liberty in story's retelling. Such exaggerations were common then, as they are today, and were especially true for historical reenactments where

accuracy was less important than the act of honoring, remembering, and memorializing. For example, when old veterans from the Battle of Gettysburg met to commemorate the battle, they recreated Pickett's Charge. Instead of stabbing each other with bayonets, the Billy Yanks and Johnny Rebs threw-down their rifles and embraced instead. On the final day of the Pioneer Jubilee and the semi-centennial anniversary of the pioneer's arrival, Saturday, July 24th, a reproduction of the original wagon train entering the valley was staged. Thousands of fair-goers lined the street to watch what Horace Whitney described as the "most complete, effective and pathetic delineation that could have been imagined."[31] For their part, event organizers located original covered wagons from the trek and fashioned them up with wheels, supplies, and materials of fifty years earlier. Organizers found the most "decrepit" looking animals from the community—old, broken, and bent cows and horses—and hitched the animals together in mismatched pairs. One wagon was pulled by a horse and a cow; another wagon was pulled by two oxen and a horse. Imagining the most challenging and difficult scenario possible, organizers exaggerated the original pioneers' conditions, placing old women or children in charge of driving the wagons. As Whitney described, there were "wagons with one wheel missing, wagons out of which sick people peered."[32] No one was more delighted by the depiction than the groups of pioneers seated in the stands.

Creating Other "Others": Native Americans in the Pioneer Jubilee

When the Saints first arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847, they found several tribes of Native Americans already subsisting on the extremely limited, life-sustaining resources there and in nearby valleys. Carefully weighing their need to use the land for the establishment of Zion against their obligation to accommodate their Native American neighbors and bring them the message of the Book of Mormon during the first few years of settlement, Brigham Young carefully maintained a peaceful balance between Indian friend and colonizer. In his rhetoric, Young encouraged the Saints to extend kindness and to be fair, hoping that through friendship and trade the Indians would seek the type of cultural assimilation the Mormons had resisted. In the tight confines of a shared environment, conflict was inevitable, especially as Mormon pioneers continued to flock to the valley in increasing numbers, extending Mormon settlements further and further into Ute, Shoshone, Apache, and Navajo lands. It was a scenario which repeated other American patterns. For example, William Penn originally counseled cooperation with native peoples. But Pennsylvania's persistent growth soon took that colony far beyond his envisioned scope. Utah was similar, and the results were predictable. Violent clashes occurred in 1849, 1850, 1853, and 1860, before culminating in the Black Hawk War that was fought between the years 1865 and 1872.[33] After many bloody battles, the indigenous tribal groups were forced onto permanent federal reservations. The Northern Ute tribes were relocated to the Uintah Reservation in northeastern Utah; the Northern Shoshone and Bannock tribes would eventually be forced onto the Fort Hall Reservation in central Idaho.

The Indians played an important role in the development of Utah and, hoping to provide a realistic recreation of the conditions and environment native to the Salt Lake Valley as of 1847, the Commission insisted on including Native Americans in the festivities. However, the ways in which the Indians were allowed to participate served to emphasize elements of their racial and

cultural otherness. This parallels the pattern described by Matthew Frye Jacobsen, in which non-mainstream and oft-persecuted religious groups at the turn of the twentieth century, like Catholics and Jews, accentuated their own racial whiteness by strategically accentuating others' non-whiteness. Mormons too would argue for their inclusion into the American mainstream by emphasizing their racial superiority over Native American.[34] In so doing, they fit directly into the currents of nordicism which swirled through American life at the turn of the century. At the Pioneer Jubilee, Native Americans were depicted in ways that emphasized their otherness or forced them to play stereotypical antagonistic roles that accentuated their savagery.

For example, late in May 1897, Ernest Rognon, the member of the Jubilee Commission responsible for amusement during the celebration, received a letter written and signed by three men, Brian Young, Hyrum Beck, and J. J. Bamberger, the three men who were leasing the recently completed Beck's Cycle Track—a massive indoor track for bicycle racing that included bleachers and an area for performances. The letter described in detail a proposition that would cash in on the nation's infatuation with the Wild West by making it central to a national spectacle. In the process, both parties stood to profit financially. The letter proposed that if the Commission would furnish them with at least twenty-five cowboys, fifty Indians, and $500, then these men would furnish the track, advertising, arrangements, buffalo, and train accommodations to host a Wild West show. Here, again, the Mormons demonstrated that, in terms of popular culture and spectacle, they shared similar preferences with the American mainstream of the day.

In very "conservative terms," the letter provided the cash-strapped Jubilee with the promise of 25% of the gross ticket sales—a number they estimated would be at least $900. If money alone would not convince the Commission, Young, Beck, and Baumberger also described several of the features that would "undoubtedly attract attention." For example, they had access to a man, "who is very expert at riding and trick shooting . . . standing of *{sic}* the back of a wild bucking bronco, and rolling cigarettes or breking *{sic}* glass balls." This man had, in fact, trained

with Buffalo Bill himself, and of whom, "Buffalo Bill has spoken to us in highest terms of praise." The letter also describes how the buffalo and Indians "would be attractive" spectacles, bringing people and their money to the show. The letter then provided a sample eight-act program, describing how "The Wild and Wooly West" at Beck's Hot Springs Cycle Track would play out.[35] The proposition was accepted and arrangements were made to have cowboys and Native American present for a week of shows.

When the Jubilee began, the "Wild and Wooly West" program, much like in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, gave white cowboys opportunities to demonstrate their showmanship, courage, and heroism for the cheering crowds. Far more important than historical accuracy in the show was delivering a moralistic parable in which good conquers evil. The various acts enabled the cowboys to show beyond any doubt that they belonged on the good side of the moral equation. In Act 2, cowboys participated in a Grand Cowboy tournament, demonstrating their skill in challenging and dangerous events. Prizes would be given to the cowboy in categories like lassoing, riding wild broncos, and fancy and trick riding. Meanwhile, in Act 5, Indians took the stage and reenacted scenes from their past that served to alienate them from the spectators because of their exoticism. Such scenes depicted them as hostile, violent, and a war-faring people. The *Salt Lake Tribune* provided a colorful description of the first show:

> There was a whoop, flashes of trinketry and feathers, and on came the Bannocks dressed, or, to be accurate, undressed for the warpath. There were thirty bucks, most of them stripped down to the buff except for the breechcloth about their loins. That beautiful claybank smear with which they delight to daub their hides gave them the color of chocolate caramels. Each warrior wore a huge tuft of feathers over his haunches, making him resemble a bantam rooster as he hopped through the ghost dance.

As these men danced, eight medicine men gathered around a war drum, hesitating to begin until they were admonished that "this was only play for the palefaces." At this point, they began "El Coyote" march. The newspaper described the dance as "low and plaintive at first, the whine of a

panther was thrown in by a bass, and suddenly the war-drum gave an indignant throb as the bravest medicine fellow whacked it a vicious blow."

The language used in this account accentuates the exotic, neo-animalistic identity of the Bannock Indian dancers. Within this one paragraph, the Indians were twice described as animals—a rooster and a panther—suggesting to the reader their unfettered wildness and savagery. Clay was smeared, not onto their skin, but onto their "hides," again a reference to their animalistic qualities. In this description, the Indians were set apart as sub-human and as others.

The program's Grand Finale, Act 8, was by far the most elaborate and narrative scene. The act began as a single emigrant wagon crossed the dusty grounds representing the plains. As the pioneers made camp for the night, a band of Indians charged out of the darkness on horseback, shattering the silence by shouting and whooping as they descended upon the helpless travelers. The pioneer and his family appear helpless, falling to their knees as they plead for mercy. The audience sat in horror and watched as the emigrant family was slaughtered. One Indian brave lifted a prop that looked like a scalp into the air and unleashed a primal victory cry. However, his celebration cry was cut short as the audience heard a new sound in the distance—the unmistakable rumble of galloping horses' hooves. In a blur, a team of cowboys and soldiers on horseback rushed onto the scene and were met by the roar of the crowd. Although, tragically, they were too late to save the pioneer and his family, they presence suggested that the wrong would be made right. Justice would enact revenge. Good would triumph over evil. A battle ensued and the heroic cowboys, fearing nothing and seeking only justice and the assurance of a peaceful environment for the spread of the American ideals of freedom and democracy, disposed of the Indian braves and then, as the audience cheered, the victor stood triumphantly over his fallen foes.

In the same way that Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show offered a distorted claim to historical authenticity, "confound[ing] distinctions between 'reality' and 'representation,'' the

cowboys and Indians of this "Wild and Wooly West" performance gave audiences excitement and adventure in a safe and secure context. [36] The show also reaffirmed a popular vision of the West that demarcated good and evil along strictly racial lines. In this narrative, the white-good and non-white-bad assignments enabled predominately white-European Mormons to use their ethnicity to create in their minds an imaginary association with the other white-European Americans that constituted the mainstream.

The Commission imported other groups of Native Americans to bring attention to the racial contrast between the pioneer's whiteness and the Indian's otherness. In early May 1897, the Commission began an earnest attempt to identify interested bands from Utah, Idaho, and Colorado that would be willing to come to Salt Lake City to perform during the Jubilee. During this search, the Commission signed a contract with the Grand Junction Indian Brass Band, a band composed of thirty Indian youth, managed by Theodore G. Lemmon, then the superintendent of the Teller Institute of Grand Junction. The Teller Institute was established in 1886 as a boarding school for Ute children from the Utah reservation. Like many Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, it was patterned on Richard Pratt's Carlisle Indian Institute School in Pennsylvania. Foremost among its educational goals was hastening the assimilation of Indian children through separating them from their home cultures and immersing them in mainstream practices and professions. Lemmon mandated the assimilation of Ute children through total immersion in the mainstream white culture. The children were given American names and forced to learn and speak English. Their hair was cut short and weapons were replaced with band instruments. The contract, as agreed to by the Commission, furnished the band with roundtrip transportation from Grand Junction, Colorado to Salk Lake City, hotel accommodations, streetcar fair to the events, and a salary of $1.50 per person per day.[37]

The hotels in Salt Lake City were already overflowing by the time the Indian band arrived late Monday night, forcing them to camp outdoors that first night. After locating the other

contingency of Indian performers, the group of camping Indians number more than fifty, “attracting,” as the newspaper describes, “a great deal of attention.”[38] The fact that the camping arrangements made by the Indians were important enough for the newspaper suggest that even when they were not performing, the Indians in attendance were viewed as human spectacles, as oddities, as others.

Like all the other bands, the Indian Brass Band was invited to play multiple times while at the Jubilee. On Tuesday, the first day of the Jubilee, for example, the Brass Band was invited to play an afternoon concert at nearby Saltair Resort. The arrangement was mutually beneficially--providing the Indian band members an opportunity to visit the shores of the Great Salk Lake while giving Saltair a marketable exotic attraction to increase ticket sales. The following day, the Indian Brass Band and all other bands comprised solely of children and teenagers were asked to march in the Children’s Parade and then play the street corners afterwards. A week before the Jubilee began, Nat Brigham, the Jubilee’s Grand Marshall, invited John Mills Whitaker, a prominent local business, to serve alongside him in the capacity of the Superintendent in charge of the Children’s Day Parade. Whitaker agreed and immediately began making plans for the event. On a sheet of paper, Whitaker drew a map of downtown Salt Lake City, including the location of the recently completed Salt Lake Temple and the route of the Children’s Day Parade. He then drew circles at the intersections of major roads around the temple and labeled each with the name of a children’s band. The community bands from Parowan, Tremont, and Provo were to play on blocks nearest to the temple. The bands from Ogden, Beaver, Grantsville, and Wellsville were to play at nearby intersections, further away from the Salt Lake Temple than the bands from Parowan, Tremont, and Provo but still well within view of the Temple. Whitaker designated the Indian Brass band to play not on an intersection but in the middle of a block on State Street, the furthest distance from and not within view of the temple. While on the periphery, they would be a part of the aural atmosphere surrounding the heart of Salt Lake City.

Whether deliberate or not, Whitaker's placement of the Indian Band is suggestive of an attitude of racial superiority. Much like the organizers of the 1893 Chicago's World Columbian Exposition created a sliding scale of humanity by organizing ethnographic communities in order of their perceived level of civilization, with the lowest, most barbaric people being placed at the extreme opposite end of the White City, the alabaster representation of white superiority, so too then can Whitaker's placement of the Indians at the most distance from the Salt Lake Temple, the white, granite edifice referred to as the "House of the Lord," represent a view of Indian inferiority. [39]

The Bombardment of *General Garfield*

Sometime during early 1897, members of the Semi-Centennial Commission began inquiring about the availability of a boat that could be demolished for entertainment during the Jubilee. They reasoned the allure of such an event would drive up box office ticket sales, a portion of which would cover the Jubilee expenses, as fair-goers would flock to the shore to catch a glimpse of the cannon fire and boat's explosive destruction.

The commission instructed H. F. McGarvie, whose prior experience as the Director-General of the San Francisco Midwinter Exhibition of 1894 made him a valuable asset, to inspect the *General Garfield,* a 130-foot long steamer moored at nearby Garfield Beach, and to ascertain the likelihood of raising the steamer from its moorings and towing it off-shore. In a letter dated June 22, 1897 McGarvie reported that he had traveled to Garfield Beach along the south end of the lake, and there enlisted the help of a "Capt. Davis." The two found, while "inspect[ing] the hull thoroughly," the steamer filled with "two feet of water and one foot of sand." After pumping the "water, sand, and other debris" from the hull, McGarvie again checked the integrity of the vessel and found it to be "perfectly sound." According to his assessment, the water in the steamer was the result of recent "snow and rain" and not from a hole in the hull. Next, McGarvie enlisted the help of "Capt. Barrett," a resident of the beach. Barrett convinced McGarvie that the boat would move in the right conditions and for the right price. Barrett promised that if the steamer's thousand pound anchor was lifted and he had the right wind conditions, he could make *General Garfield* float "in a very few moments."[40]

John Fitch and Robert Fulton are credited with pioneering the American steamboat industry in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Soon, steam replaced sail not just on riverine craft such as paddle-wheelers, but on ocean-going ships. By the 1860s, steamships, were a source of American technological pride and symbols of the nation's rapid progress as a civilized, industrial

country. But in Utah, Brigham Young and other leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints saw these as aquatic equivalents to the railroads, which they always viewed with ambivalence. They hesitated to embrace the steamer, fearful that these vessels, like the locomotive, would open up the territory and its resources to outside development and influences. Such had been the case during the push to complete the transcontinental railroad in 1869, when a railroad boomtown sprung up along the Union Pacific Railroad at the northern end of the Salt Lake designed to compete economically and politically with the Mormons in Salt Lake City. As the "Gentile Capital of Utah," Corinne became the home to the territory's non-Mormon population, embracing the atmosphere and culture of an Old West frontier town with fifteen saloons, sixteen liquor stores, and a gun-toting marshal to keep order.[41]

Patrick Connor despised Brigham Young's tight grip on the political and economic systems of the Utah territory. Connor hoped to overturn Young's control by introducing the steamboat to the Salt Lake region. The steamboat, Connor hoped, would enable non-Mormon commercial and mining enterprises to expand in the territory. Although his steamboat, *Kate Connor*, was neither an economic nor a technical success, it became a symbol of economic progress as well as a demonstration of independence from Mormon control. It opened the way for similar attempts at breaking Mormon control over the economic development of the territory, signaling that, while Mormons were likely to remain predominant in Utah, the state was not to be immune from external influences.

The boat the Jubilee Commission sought to destroy was the *General Garfield*, a steamer first launched on the Bear River on May 24, 1871 under the name *City of Corinne.* The *City of Corinne,* by all accounts, was a massive vessel, glamorous, expensive and out of place among the smaller ships and sailboats of the Great Salt Lake. The local newspaper measured her length at 130 feet, twice the length of *Kate Connor,* with "beam 28 feet, depth of hold 7 feet, tonnage 300 tons, and has passenger accommodations for 150 persons."[42] As her name suggests, the steamer

was purchased as an investment by the Corinne Steam Navigation Company composed of non-Mormon businessmen from Corinne. By offering cheaper freighting rates than the Mormon-owned Utah Central Railroad, the steamer, theoretically, would capture the growing mineral transport business and divert more of the territory's resources away from the Mormons of Salt Lake City and instead through the "Gentile Capital of Utah" in Corinne. Therefore, to the Mormons, the *City of Corinne* was a floating representation of yet another attempt by "Gentiles" to undermine Mormon control and snatch away power of the territory. The vessel emerged as an example of the hard fact that statehood involved reciprocal influences. The wider gentile society was not going to be somnolent or inert, and the church would need to maintain its alertness even as it reconstituted Utah from a place apart into a state within the United States.

During its first few months of service in June and July 1871, the steamer transported passengers and cargo from Corinne on the transcontinental railroad, across the Great Salt Lake, to the newly established Lake Point resort along the southern edge of the lake. With the lure of sandy beaches, investors felt they would quickly recoup the $40,000 price tag of the top-of-the-line steamer. However, as the summer months passed, water levels fluctuated, business faded and sales dropped. Despite continued efforts to promote the resort and steamer, business never picked up and investors declared the venture a financial failure. In April 1872, the owners cut ties with the luxurious steamer and sold her to the H. S. Jacobs & Co mining company of Salt Lake City.[43]

Ownership of the steamer would exchange hands a few times during the subsequent years, even being purchased, much to the humiliation of the anti-Mormon citizens of Corinne, by John W. Young, a son of Brigham Young. In September 1875, President-to-be James Garfield took a complimentary tour of the lake upon the *City of Corinne.* Afterwards, a fellow passenger recommended the name of the steamer be changed to *General Garfield*, in honor of the Civil War General and aspiring politician. That same year, Thomas Douris, an aspiring entrepreneur, purchase the steamer. In 1881, after piloting the steamer across the lake for years, Douris

anchored his ship and built a bathing and boating facility named Garfield Beach. Douris would dismantle the mechanical components of the steamer and use it as a floating hotel, a changing room for bathers, and a boathouse for the Salt Lake Rowing Club. Now, the Jubilee's Commission sought to destroy this vessel and all it stood for. In hindsight, such an event seems needlessly excessive, violent and wanton for the peace-loving and frugal Mormons.[44] The overreaction against the boat carries a heavy element of unintentional humor. So why was this event, one that seemingly had nothing to do with pioneers, featured so prominently in the fair?

Recent explorations of the role of amusement and amusement parks in late-nineteenth century American culture provide us with a series of potential clues for the commission's line of thinking. In an article first published in 1982, cultural historian Russell Nye outlines eight potential explanations for the popularity of spectacles in America at the turn of the century. One potential explanation offered by Nye is that the bombardment provided the lure of "riskless risk." In other words, it provided a "sense of imminent danger and the likelihood of disaster without the culmination of either." Such brushes with death brought the conspicuous joys of "vicarious terror" and "hair's-breadth escape." If this were the case, the boat bombardment would be a forerunner to similar disaster re-creations performed in the first decade of the twentieth century at locations like Coney Island that depicted catastrophes like the Johnstown Flood, the Fall of Pompeii, and the San Francisco Fire.[45] However, first-hand accounts of the bombardment speak little of the risks or dangers felt by those in attendance during the ordeal. The boat, though full of explosives, was to be one-mile off shore. The cannons were removed from the shoreline to a location that offered zero-risk to the nearby crowds. Thus, this explanation seems unlikely.

A second theory offered by Russell Nye is that the bombardment represented a fantasy spectacle, a production meant to be seen and heard. As I have previously demonstrated, conflict was an essential structural element of the Western narrative, pitting the heroic white cowboy or frontiersman against savage environments and peoples. In the popular construction of this

narrative, it was often through violence that the cowboy subjugated the savage. This perception of the West as a violent and stateless society was continued to be perpetuated through popular culture through the present day, leading some to wrongfully assume that frontier violence shaped our national character and confirms our culture's obsession with war and gun violence. [46] In actuality, these perceptions are unfounded and dangerous. The West was generally a peaceful region composed of hard-working farmers and ranchers. Yet, the prevalence of violence in popular culture brought some to fantasize about such violence in reality.

I believe the destruction of the *General Garfield* was symbolically important in two major ways. First, the bombardment symbolized a subversive message from Mormons to the surrounding Gentile community. Second, it represented the blending of modernity into the violent component of the Western narrative. The choice of bombarding the *General Garfield* is a significant one. A successful bombing would demonstrate Utah's National Guard's military might and provide the audience with a level of entertainment on par with other demolition stunts performed at popular amusement parks, like the Jamestown Flood or Five-Alarm Fire at New York's Coney Island.

In what organizers intended to be a celebration of progress marked by the destruction of the old and obsolete to make way for the new, the Commission requested the steamboat be towed from its mooring near the pier to a spot roughly a mile from the shore but well within the range of the cannons of the Utah National Guard. There, with thousands watching, the boat would be destroyed as a symbolic gesture of the Church's perseverance. On the fourth day of the Jubilee, Friday, July 20, over 8,000 people crammed along the boardwalks of Garfield Beach and neighboring Saltair to witness the demolition of "the celebrated old steamboat, *General Garfield*."[47] The *Salt Lake Tribune* provides a colorful account of the event. According to the article, despite McGarvie and Barrett's earlier promises to free the steamer from its moorings, ". . . [*General Garfield*'s] hulk was imbedded too deeply in the salt and sand." Workers attached the

steamer to a nearby locomotive in an attempt to jar it free, but the locomotive was "ineffectual to stir the vessel more than a few inches."[48]

Fearful of potential commercial loss and a humiliating public fiasco, event organizers quickly developed an alternative plan. A makeshift skiff was located and rowed approximately half a mile off the shore and anchored. Workers, using anything they could find, built additions onto the skiff to "give it the appearance . . . of a respectable craft." Then, the hull was loaded with giant powder, a blasting substance made from nitroglycerin, sodium nitrate, and sulfur, sealed up, and abandoned by the crew. At this crudely constructed, dynamite-laden skiff, the gunners of the Utah National Guard fired a total of twenty-six shots, solid balls and shells. According to the *Tribune*, when the guardsmen exhausted the ammunition, "[the skiff] looked good for an indefinite number of additional shots." Lieut. Jackson with a few guardsmen rowed out to inspect the damage. Upon returning, they reported the skiff was "in a bad way" from the seven shots that had penetrated the hull. However, a "private soldier who was angered because he was compelled to provide the motive power for the row-boat" provided the *Tribune* with a contrary report: ". . . the only cannon ball that struck the skiff was the one that Lieut. Jackson threw into it on that trip."[49]

Though intended to be a "magnificent display of pyrotechnics" and an opportunity to blend modern warfare advancements with the violent history of the American West, the bombardment of the *General Garfield* was a disaster, at least for the agenda intended by the Mormon authorities. As sheer spectacle for onlookers, however, it was probably quite entertaining. Just as the steamer stood for years as a stationary symbol of the gentile's failed attempts to subvert Mormon control of the territories, the steamer would stand for another seven years as a reminder of the Jubilee's failed attempt to blow it up. In 1904, a fire swept through Garfield Beach, destroying the resort and its unmovable steamer.

Conclusion

Between July 20th and 24th, untold thousands of visitors descended upon Salt Lake City to attend the 1897 Utah Pioneer Jubilee and to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of Mormon pioneers into the valley. Little did they realize that carefully crafted into the events, advertisements, souvenirs, and literature was a subtle attempt by fair organizers to use the celebration as a façade for a deliberate restructuring of the Mormon public image into something more in-line with accepted and popular visions of the West. By celebrating the aged pioneers, the "founding fathers" of Mormon civilization in Utah, the Jubilee Commission incorporated the rhetoric and symbols of the mythical Western narrative that had grown in popularity through mainstream popular culture into the retelling of Mormon history. The goal was to help non-Mormon outsiders identify with the Mormon pioneers and to connect their efforts in settling Zion with the nation's overarching goals of settling and conquering the West. In this way, Mormon religious outsiders could become repositioned as heroic, quintessentially American, and more than capable of seamless assimilation into the fabric of America's national body.

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[1] Richard D. Poll, "The Americanism of Utah." *Utah Historical Quarterly* 44 (Winter 1976): 76 – 93.

[2] James E. Talmage, *Diaries*, vol. 9, 1 January 1896 – 31 December 1897, L. Tom Perry Special Collections Library, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

[3] "Received with Great Joy," *The Deseret News*, January 10, 1896.

[4] Official Report and Financial State of the Utah Semi-Centennial Commission and Official Programme," Utah State Archives and Record Service, Series 1195, Box 1, Folder 17.. By all estimates, the Utah Pioneer Jubilee would not rival the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition in size or cultural significance nor would the Jubilee surpass the estimated 2 million visitors that attended the California Midwinter International Exposition of 1894 held in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park.

[5] *Semi-Centennial Commission Book of the Pioneers*, Vol. 1. Utah State Archives and Record Service, Semi-Centennial Commission, Series 14107, Box , Folder 1, pg. 3 -5.

[6] Much has been written about the accommodations made by Mormons during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to American norms, particularly during this period of transition. See, for example, Leonard Arrington, "Crisis in Identity: Mormon Responses in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries." In *Mormonism and American Culture*, ed. Marvin S. Hill and James. B.

Allen (New York: Harper & Row, 1972): 168-184; Jan Shipps, "In the Presence of the Past: Continuity and Change in Twentieth-Century Mormonism." In *After 150 Years*, ed. Thomas Alexander and Jessie Embry (Provo, UT: Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Brigham Young University, 1983): 1-35; Armaud Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Gordon Shepard and Gary Shepard, *A Kingdom Transformed: Themes in the Development of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1984); and Thomas Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1986). Arguing against the significance of the year 1890 as a moment of great rupture in Mormonism is Grant Underwood, "Re-visioning Mormon History." *The Pacific Historical Review* (1986): 403-426.

[7] Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 24.

[8] I borrowed the term "counter-subversion" from David Britton Davis, "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature." *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47, no. 2 (Sept. 1960): 205-224.

[9] My interpretation was shaped by an introductory essay on the 1897 Utah Pioneer Jubilee written by the Daughters of Utah Pioneers. The essay is located at http://www.dupinternational.org/jubilee/main.htm

[10] Important studies of the Mormon public image include Spencer Fluhman, "*A Peculiar People": Anti-Mormonism and the Making of Religion in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012);Terryl L. Givens, *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Jan Shipps, "From Satyr to Saint: American Perceptions of the Mormons, 1860-1960," in her *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years Among the Mormns* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000); Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constinutional Conflict in Nineteenth Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), and Matthew Grow, "Contesting the LDS Image: The North American Review and the Mormons, 1881-1907," *Journal of Mormon History* 32, 2 (Summer 2006), 111-138. Older studies include David Brion Davis, "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47 (September 1960): 205-24; Leonard J. Arrington and Jon Haupt, "Intolerable Zion: The Image of Mormonism in Nineteenth-Century American Literature," *Western Humanities Review* 22 (Summer 1968): 243-60; Charles A. Cannon, "The Awesome Power of Sex: The Polemic Campaign against Mormon Polygamy," *Pacific Historical Quarterly* 43 (February 1974): 61-82; Lester E. Bush, "A Peculiar People: The Physiological Aspects of Mormonism, 1850-1975," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon History* 12 (Fall 1979): 61-83; Gary L. Bunker and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Graphic Image, 1834-1914: Cartoons, Caricatures, and Illustrations* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983); and Gregory Pingree, "'The Biggest Whorehouse in the World': Representations of Plural Marriage in Nineteenth-Century America," *Western Humanities Review* 50 (Fall 1996): 213-32.

[11] The men and women who refused the initial nomination to serve on the Jubilee Commission were Charles R. Savage, Mrs. A. W. McCune, Joseph Stanford, and John Murdock.

[12] "Official Report and Financial State of the Utah Semi-Centennial Commission and Official Programme," Utah State Archives and Record Service, Series 1195, Box 1, Folder 17, pg. 5.

[13] Mormons were not unique in their use of narrative to imply they were "first" in bringing civilization and modernity to a region and implying that Indians lacked these things but were

continuing a tradition of colonization and imperialism with origins in the New World in New England. See, for example, Jean M. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

[14] Horace Whitney, "A Jubilee Review," *Improvement Era* 1, no. 2 (Dec. 1897): 66.

[15] Ibid, 66.

[16] Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 423.

[17] "Official Report and Financial State of the Utah Semi-Centennial Commission and Official Programme," Utah State Archives and Record Service, Series 1195, Box 1, Folder 17, pg. 11.

[18] Ibid, 11.

[19] Ibid, 11.

[20] See Michael Denning, *Mechanical Accents: Dime Novels and Working Class Culture in America* (New York: Verso, 1998), chapter 1; Christine Bold, "The Voice of the Fiction Factory in Dime and Pulp Westerns, "*Journal of American Studies* 17, no. 1 (1983): 29-46; and Albert Johannsen, *The House of Beadle and Adams, and Its Dime and Nickel Novels: The Study of a Vanished Literature* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950).

[21] Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 21

[22] I find it ironic that Mormons felt it necessary to rescript the details of their history in order to become "more American." Their experience of seeking religious freedom through trekking westward into the wild is arguably more quintessentially American than their manufactured Western narrative version. Harking back to the Pilgrims and Puritans who likewise sought refuge from the tyranny of religious bigotry by embarking on a dangerous journey to an uncivilized land, Mormons perhaps chose the wrong narrative to emulate.

[23] "Official Report and Financial State of the Utah Semi-Centennial Commission and Official Programme," Utah State Archives and Record Service, Series 1195, Box 1, Folder 17, pg. 21. The Commission wrote, "Recognizing the advantage which the advertising of his coming would be to the Jubilee and the appropriateness of his presence at a celebration given to commemorate an event in the history of the settlement of his country, second only, in the opinion of many, to the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, the Commission determined to formally invite the President of the United States and his Cabinet to be present at the Jubilee, and in response to popular demand, to extend the invitation formally to the Hon. William J. Bryan."

[24] *Semi-Centennial Commission Book of the Pioneers*, Vol. 1. Utah State Archives and Record Service, Semi-Centennial Commission, Series 14107, pg. 8 - 10

[25] *The Pony Express* 1, no. 2, (May 12, 1897): 12.

[26] See, for examples of the letterhead, "Semi-Centennial Commission," Utah State Archives and Record Service, Series 1195, Box 1, Folder 1.

[27] "Utah Pioneer Jubilee: 1847-1897," L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

[28] According to the *Book of the Pioneers*, the official account of the Jubilee written by the Commission and gifted to the Congress, states that only 318 surviving pioneers made the march that day.

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[29] Richard G. Oman, “Beehive Symbol.” *The Encyclopedia of Mormonism.* Ed. Daniel H. Ludlow. (New York: Macmillan, 1992): 99.

[30] In a letter by Spencer Clawson to Edward Colborn, Clawson complains about the design. The Commission drew a rough sketch of the badge and invited Tiffany’s & Co. to improve upon the design. Clawson wrote how the Commission gave Tiffany’s “every liberty to embellish it and improve it in any way that their superior judgment might suggest.” However, as Clawson continues, “they perhaps overlooked that part, as they now state they would have made some changes . . .” Letter from Clawson to Colborn dated September 29, 1897 in Semi-Centennial Commission, Utah State Archives and Record Service, Series 1195, Box 1, Folder 9.

[31] Horace G. Whitney, “A Jubilee Review.” *Improvement Era* 1, no. 2 (December 1897): 73.

[32] Ibid, 74.

[33] For more on the troublesome relationship between Mormons and local Indian tribes, see John Alton Peterson, *Utah’s Black Hawk War* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1999); Jared Farmer, *On Zion’s Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Scott Christensen, *Sagwitch: Shoshone Chieftan, Mormon Elder, 1822-1887* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1999).

[34] Mathew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 39-138.

[35] “Letter to E.G. Rognon Esq. from B[?]. Young, Hyrum Beck, and J. J. Baumberger dated May 24, 1897.” Utah History Archive and Record Service, Series 1195.

[36] Joy S. Kasson, *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000) pg. 222.

[37] See the contract between the Utah Semi-Centennial Commission and the Grand Junction Indian Band dated June 16, 1897 in Semi-Centennial Commission, Utah State Archives and Record Service, .Series 1195, Box 1, Folder 1. For more on the Grand Function Indian School see, K. MacKendrick, “Cesspools, Alkali, and White Lily Soap: The Grand Junction Indian School, 1886-1911.” *Journal of Western Slope* 8, no. 3 (Summer 1993).

[38] “Weezy Music,” *The Salt Lake Tribune.* July 2, 1897, sec. A.

[39] For more on the American construction of racial hierarchy at the 1893 and other American-based world’s fairs, see Robert Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press: 1987).

[40] “Letter from H. F. McGarvie to Members of the Commission, dated July 3, 1897.” Utah State Archive and Record Service, Series 1145.

[41] Brigham Madsen, *Utah History Encyclopedia*. “Corrine,” accessed August 1, 2013, http://www.uen.org/utah_history_encyclopedia/c/CORRINNE.html.

[42] *Corrine Daily Reporter,* June 15, 1871.

[43] See the *Salt Lake Tribune*, May 22, 1871. Also see Dale L. Morgan, *The Great Salt Lake* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1947), 294-300; David E. Miller, “The Great Salt Lake,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 27 (July 1959): 297-311; Brigham D. Madsen, *Corinne: The Gentile Capital of Utah* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1980), 157-169; Peter G. Van Alfen, “Sail and Steam: Great Salt Lake’s Boats and Boatbuilders, 1847-1901,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 63 (Summer 1995): 194-221; Ouida Blanthorn, comp., *A*

History of Tooele County (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1998), 156-158; and Frederick M. Huchel, *A History of Box Elder County* (Salt Lake City: Box Elder County Commission and Utah State Historical Society, 1999), 135-139.

[44] In Horace G. Whitney's "A Jubilee Review," published in the *Improvement Era*, he mentions a public out roar raised by the community in response to some of the proposed events. "The extravagance of buying gold badges for the Pioneers was loudly inveighed against, and once an injunction by legal process was hinted at; while the wanton waste of building perishable floats and the sin of investing in such transitory amusements as fireworks was as bitterly declaimed against by another class of objectors." (pg 66-67)

[45] Russell B. Nye, "Eight Ways of Looking at an Amusement Park," *Journal of Popular Culture* 15, no. 1 (1981): 63-75. Also see John Kasson's examination of amusement park rides at Coney Island in *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century (*New York: Hill & Wang, 1978).

[46] See for example Thomas J. DiLorenzo, "The Culture of Violence in the American West: Myth versus Reality," *The Independent Review: A Journal of Political Economy* 15, no. 2 (Fall 2010) who argues that the American West was much more peaceful than American cities today. He blames the United States federal government's policies towards the Native Americans on the plains for the prevalence of the "Violent West" myth.

[47] Reed Smoot Papers, "Program of the Utah Pioneer Jubilee." MSS 1187 Box 96, Folder 17; L. Tom Perry Special Collections Library. Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

[48] "Thousands at the Lake," *Salt Lake Tribune*. July 24, 1897. sec. A.

[49] Ibid, sec. A.

CHAPTER 3

"MEN WITH THE BARK ON": MORMONS, THE WESTERN NARRATIVE, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A MASCULINE MORMON IDEAL

In January 1900, Heber J. Grant, then an apostle of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who would later serve as its Prophet and President, penned a short, autobiographical sketch for the *Improvement Era* (*IE*), one of the Church's many official periodicals. At the time of Grant's writing, the *IE* functioned as the publishing arm of the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association (YMMIA), the organization tasked with overseeing the instruction of the Church's young men. As such, the *IE* featured articles from Church leaders, local scholars, and distinguished members of the community that communicated standards and advice to the Church's young men. These articles provide a valuable lens for understanding the challenges—both spiritual and temporal—the Church perceived in the lives of its young men and the solutions whereby the Church believed these young men could overcome challenges through living in harmony with Christ's teachings, as the Church understood them.[1]

Grant dramatized his transformation from a soft, weak, effeminate boy into a strong, respected man through discipline, physical exertion, and perseverance. He expressed hope that his words would inspire young men to "faithfully do their best in the daily battle of life," implying, through the life-as-battle metaphor, a correlation in his mind between success (again, both spiritual and temporal) and the strength, courage, and rectitude embodied by popular trends in masculinity. As an only child in a widow's home, Grant confessed that his childhood physique, chores, and education were shaped by the designs and intentions of his mother. He admittedly resembled a "hot-house plant:" "long and lanky, but not substantial." While other boys ran around

the neighborhood, played games, and exercised, Grant, ensnared in his mother's sphere of domesticity, learned to wash dishes, sweep floors, and care for the home. As a result, when he joined the local baseball club, Grant lacked the physical strength to throw, run, or bat as well as the other boys and was thus assigned to the third team composed of much younger boys. Because of his weakness (he could not throw the ball from one base to the next), the other boys teased him, called him names, and taunted him with catcalls such as, "Throw it here, sissy!" Undeterred and channeling the ethos of the "strenuous life" years before it was championed by his contemporary, Theodore Roosevelt, Grant vowed to better himself at any cost and to play on the territory's championship-winning baseball team.[2]

After shining enough shoes to buy a baseball of his own, Grant wrote, "I spent hours and hours throwing the ball at a neighbor's barn . . . Often my arm would ache so that I could scarcely go to sleep at night. But I kept on practicing . . ." [3] Eventually, Grant's perseverance and hard work paid-off: he started for the Red Stocking baseball team that won the Utah Territorial championship in 1877. Looking retrospectively at this experience from his adolescences, Grant recognized the transformative powers of toughness, grit, perseverance, and, above all else, hard work. Already an authoritative ecclesiastic figure within the Church, Grant also sought to position himself, through his story, as a masculine role model for the Church's young men. Grant wrote this sketch during a band of years between 1890 and 1920 when members of the LDS Church recognized a crisis of masculinity emerging in the lives of their men—both young and old. Grant's writing is indicative of the Church's determination to refashion Mormon masculinity during this era defined by change. This New Mormon Masculinity worked on the practical, local level to bolster the virility of its male members. It also served to bridge the gap between Mormons and the American mainstream by drawing upon popular currents within the Protestant muscular Christianity movement. As internal and external changes threated the foundation whereupon Mormon masculinity had sat for decades, Mormons found embedded in the western

narrative the characteristics of a new masculinity that would embolden its members and appeal to the American mainstream.

At the end of the nineteenth century, American men and boys, not just Mormons, seemed frazzled by challenges to the traditional benchmarks by which masculinity had been constructed and understood. The American job market rapidly evolved. Beginning in 1880, for the first time in American history, more men worked outside of agriculture than within. Farmers sold their plows and found themselves sedentary desk jobs. Furthermore, opportunities to demonstrate manliness were limited. The reclamation and settlement of the west was almost complete, closing the door to frontier adventure and the transformative experiences housed in the mythical west. The generation that came of age after the Civil War owned no "bloody shirts" to wave as proof of their manliness and many actively sought out opportunities to prove themselves and their manhood by plunging into conflicts like the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars.[4] Meanwhile, female parishioners, emboldened by their majority status within most American denominations, embraced a more active and influential role in overseeing a progressive platform for the nation's ills. Suddenly thrown from its steady footing into a churning sea of evolving gender expectations, American masculinity tottered on the edge of oblivion, during what historian and American Studies scholar Ann Douglas calls, "the feminization of American culture" that swept through the nation.[5]

The perception of a "crisis of masculinity" among American men was only exacerbated among the Mormon population. Although the use of the term "crisis" has been called into question as an all-too-common motif in gender studies, as scholars have shown men in nearly every decade involved in a "crisis" of some sort or another, I believe the term is absolutely appropriate for this moment. Without doubt, both male and female gender roles experienced fundamental shifts in their ways of thinking about and understanding gendered responsibilities.[6]

In addition to the above challenges to masculinity wrought by American modernization, these men witnessed, as Amy Hoyt and Sara Patterson ably point out, institutional changes that threatened the "pillars" upon which Mormon masculinity had hinged: the priesthood and the practice of polygamy.[7] As Congress passed increasingly punitive legislation directed at Mormon polygamy, Mormon men were, at least in their minds, forced to choose between the laws of God and the laws of man. If God had decreed through Joseph Smith and other Mormon prophets that they were to practice polygamy, should not the Church continue to practice polygamy regardless of the laws of man and the punishment? If now, under the threat of disenfranchisement, the Church changed direction and abandoned polygamy, did this mean that Joseph Smith was wrong? Did Smith not speak for God? If he did not, what else in Smith's teachings was fabricated? Such chains of questioning only brought doubt to men of the Church's doctrines and their place within the Church.

Although scholars today estimate that at its height only a small minority of church members belonged to polygamous families (most estimates range between 20 and 30 per cent), among the Church's leadership these numbers were much higher.[8] For example, Church President Brigham Young had 55 wives; his counselor, Heber C. Kimball, had 43. Thus, although only a small minority of the male membership practiced polygamy, this minority held the keys of the kingdom and exercised direct control over the spiritual and temporal affairs of the church confirming, in many male minds, that masculinity and polygamy were intrinsically connected. John Taylor, who served as the head of the Church after Brigham Young's death in 1877, claimed he had learned from Joseph Smith that polygamy was virtually a requirement for male leadership. "If we do not keep the same law that Our Heavenly Father has we cannot go with him. A man obeying a lower law is not qualified to preside over those who keep a higher law."[9] In addition to the association of polygamy with power and leadership within the church, as Taylor's quote

suggests, many Mormon men understood polygamy to be a physical manifestation of divine favor and, in the very least, a badge of religious piety and distinctiveness. Thus, polygamy, as practiced by Mormon men, functioned as a physical marker of spiritual status, a spiritual connection with the biblical leaders of the Old Testament, and a measurement of one's manliness. Also, it is worth mentioning that to mainstream Americans, polygamy was frequently the only aspect of Mormonism they had heard of. This ignorance led to prejudice, and while Church members would hardly internalize the misguided notions of their persecutors, the notoriety of polygamy did serve to cast it into a particularly glaring light. It was, in short, polarizing.

This latter association with manliness is evident in the records of Church leaders who sought to persuade men who were unwilling or hesitant to marry additional wives or to enter into polygamous relationships. One Mormon woman recorded a conversation between Heber C. Kimball and a group of these "hesitant" men. In rebuking the group, Kimball called into question their masculinity, deriding them for being subservient to a domineering wife:

> Some of the brethren here have to take more wives, whether they want to very bad or not, and Bro. [Heber C.] Kimball says those who havn't [*sic*] but one, she rules, and he makes so much fun of them, that they are ashamed, and get another as quick as they can.[10]

Elsewhere, Apostle George A. Smith ridiculed the masculinity of those men who were unamiable towards "the principle." Using sharp language to insinuate a hereditary predisposition for servitude, Smith described these men as a "poor narrow-minded, pinch-backed race of men, who chain themselves down to the law of monogamy, and live all their days under the domination of one wife."[11] Preaching the revitalizing powers of polygamy, Kimball again proclaimed, "A man who has but one wife, and is inclined to that doctrine soon begins to wither and dry up, while a man who goes into plurality looks fresh, young, and sprightly."[12]

In 1890, when Wilford Woodruff declared the Church's intention of abandoning the doctrine of polygamy and preventing members from entering into new plural marriages, he did

more than remove the most sensational element of the Church or the most glaring impediment to Utah's statehood. By discontinuing polygamy and requiring Mormon men to embrace the monogamous heterosexuality that was normative within wider (primarily Protestant) society, Woodruff's Manifesto compelled Mormon men to restructure the criteria by which their masculinity would be gauged within the Church. This is an important point with strong effects within the intramural LDS culture. As such, it was often misunderstood or overlooked by outsiders, but to Mormon men, this shift was a major development at every level of consciousness, belief, and practice. As gender scholars Amy Hoyt and Sara Patterson point out in their excellent study of changing gender expectations among Mormons in this era, the new ideal in Mormon masculinity was entrenched upon four pillars: "a changed notion of priesthood; adherence to the Word of Wisdom (a divinely revealed health code that prohibits alcohol and tobacco use); an increased expectation that young LDS men would go on missions; and monogamous heterosexuality."[13] While I agree with Hoyt and Patterson's assessment and conclusions, I also see that their argument needs to be rendered more complex by examining *how* Church officials persuaded their congregations to accept these new pillars. What was the *process* by which these pillars were constructed to stand in for masculine criteria of the past?

I contend that Mormons, like other Americans, recognized that rooted within the popular narrative of Western conquest lay the building blocks for a new vision of masculinity. Through the conquest and cultivation of wild lands and peoples, the heroes of these narrative—the Natty Bumppoo's, Daniel Boone's, and Kit Carson's—developed a rugged, primitive strength that enabled them to cohabit the civilized and uncivilized worlds. Mormon leaders attempted to blend these masculine characteristics with their own, whereby selling the nation a vision of Mormonism that was heroic and American. By reconceptualizing the past through reimagining the body and traits of Jesus Christ and church leaders—very much including Joseph Smith—as epitomizing modern notions of masculinity and by controlling the narrative of the present, Mormon church

leaders propagated a new definition of masculinity. To put it simply, Joseph Smith and his generation could properly be imagined as rugged pioneers. They were, after all. But during the age when they made their passage to Utah, being a pioneer was the default identity of all westward migrants. A generation or two later, when the western territories were settled and being integrated into the American body politic, that pioneer identity no longer seemed humdrum, but rather, heroic. When the pillars of nineteenth century Mormon masculinity crumbled and modernity threatened to over-civilize society, Mormons felt, much like Huck Finn, the urge "to light out for the Territory," this time not physically fleeing into the wilderness, but by stressing the masculine characteristics of those in the past that *had* lit-out.[14] I argue that Mormons, drawing upon the success of the Protestant muscular Christianity movement, sought to similarly reshape a new masculine ideal among its congregations by stressing new religious focal points (like the Word of Wisdom and monogamous heterosexuality) and connecting these points with a new vision of the masculine ideal, an ideal patterned after the heroic manly characteristics of the Western narrative.

Muscular Christianity and Muscular Mormonism

The Mormon response to the feminization of American culture closely mirrored the response of American Protestants a few decades earlier in what historians and cultural critics have labeled "muscular Christianity." Since the early colonization of America, women have been the more pious of the genders. According to Ann Braude's research, their numbers in every religious group in nearly every era of American history have outpaced men.[15] In the decades after the American Revolution, women began using their numerical advantage to wield greater influence over the content and tone of their religious instruction. The churches of the new nation offered at least one venue where women could exercise some influence. As men increasingly worked away from the home in the rising capitalist economy, the churches and the domestic sphere – always linked – became spaces of actualized female influence. As a result, by the mid-nineteenth century, women exerted no small amount of *de facto* control over religious institutions, a position of power they would not readily abandon. If the vast majority of clergy were men, many of the most powerful congregants were women.

Muscular Christianity arose then as an attempt by mainstream Protestant leaders to counteract the feminizing influence of female leadership within the church and to bring men back to church. Dissatisfied with sissified culture, and also frequently immersed in the competitive world of business, American men of the nineteenth century flocked away from churches and to places like fraternal lodges (such as the Masons, Odd Fellows, and Red Men), where male virtues and characteristics were praised and respected. Acknowledging these lodges' swelling popularity, sports historian Clifford Putney noted that men like Josiah Strong, G. Stanley Hall, Theodore Roosevelt, and others believed that religion and the church could similarly offset the feminization of American men. A lodge became a male refuge, replete with the kinds of rituals and bonding which later generations would rediscover, again and again. These leaders sought to "energize the

churches and to counteract the supposedly enervating effects of urban living" by promoting within the church "competitive sports, physical education, and other staples of modern-day living."[16] Proponents of muscular Christianity believed that the physical body was not a spiritual impediment or liability as had been previously taught, but rather a tool for spiritual and social wellbeing. Through organizations sponsored by Protestant congregations like the Boy Scouts and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), American men could reclaim their bodies and minds from the malaise of modernity. This was also the dawn of the organized American sports movement, as well as Luther Gulick's crusade for directed recreation in American schools. Physical fitness came to be seen as a patriotic imperative, and its counterpart as a danger to national health. By returning Christianity to its manly roots by stressing action over reaction, aggression over gentility, Protestant leaders attempted to realign piety and morality with masculinity.

In so doing, leaders of muscular Christianity redefined manhood as an amalgamation of specific traits, attributes, and roles. They taught that men should not seek out the stoicism, gentility, and self-denial prescribed by the over-civilized, buttoned-down Victorian gentleman, but instead should aspire to develop "primitive" instincts and emotions. Likewise, men should seek out opportunities to develop the physical vigor and character evident in Christ. Such prescriptive definitions of masculinity—vacillating from one extreme to another—provide a helpful context for imaging the drama inherent in this moment of "crisis." However, these extremes draw thick lines where blurry lines may have existed. The attempts of the late nineteenth century to define and redefine manhood demonstrate, as historian Gail Bederman notes, that "gender—whether manhood or womanhood—is a *historical, ideological process*" and a "continual, dynamic process."[17] By thinking about gender as a process, we see in the muscular Christianity movement the creation of a new standard, shaped in response to historical currents, whereby men could live up to a new ideal of male perfectibility. As Bederman writes, "At any

time in history, many contradictory ideas about manhood are available to explain what men are, how they ought to behave, and what sorts of powers and authorities they may claim, as men."[18] In other words, "manhood"—or "masculinity" (a term that came into general usage in the 1890s[19]) is a social construction, or as E. Anthony Rotundo describes, "a human invention."[20]

In my own research, I see no evidence of direct contact between the leaders of Protestant muscular Christianity and the Mormon Church that would suggest the sharing of ideas, methodologies, or goals between these two denominations of Christianity. The development of parallel institutions therefore is not a result of planned emulation or coordination, but rather of similar responses to cultural stimuli from the *zeitgeist*. In his analysis of muscular Mormonism, sports historian Richard Kimball suggests that the LDS variant of muscular Christianity emerged as part of the church's push to social respectability. Kimball argues muscular Mormonism may actually predate muscular Christianity, having "first appeared in the person of the Prophet Joseph Smith."[21] This is a crucial point, for the LDS church, largely by virtue of its concentration in the rugged West, was perfectly situated – unlike denominations whose numbers were thickest in the urban east. Kimball also points to the early Church's "commitment to manliness and health" that had been established as early as 1830, as evidence that Mormons may have actually been vanguards of the larger muscular movement. While Kimball's comments may be, in part, true, it is important to note that members of the early Church did not recognize this "commitment to manliness and health" as such. As I will discuss in greater length later in this chapter, while Joseph Smith did, in fact, more closely resemble a rugged frontiersman than an effeminate preacher, these attributes and physical characteristics were not hailed as such by church members during Smith's life. It is not until the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, during a cultural climate where such views were fashionable among many American religious groups, that this re-

remembering of the Church's manly origins were tailored to meet the religious and cultural requirements of American society.

Kimball sees in muscular Mormonism a renewed "focus on the athletic accomplishments of members of the faith" and that, at the turn of the twentieth century, Mormon leaders felt "a turn towards athletics could reenergize Mormon masculinity."[22] Such conclusions, though accurate, miss the larger and more significant point. While it is true Mormons turned to athletics as a method of reenergizing their masculinity, this turn occurred as part of a larger paradigm shift wherein Mormons recognized within the widespread popularity of the Western narrative an opportunity to reshape their history and image to fill specific needs. They also recognized implicitly that their claim to this Western narrative was indubitable. Indeed, that narrative lay at the heart of their formative experience. Mormons recognized in the heroes of the Western narrative characteristics that could also be found and celebrated within Mormon men: past and present. When Kimball recognizes increased attention on athletics within the Mormon tradition, he is witnessing one of the ways Mormons appropriated the narratives of Western conquest to assist in their assimilation and acceptance into mainstream American society.

Masculinity in the Western Narrative

While James Fenimore Cooper may not have intended for the protagonist of his five-volume "The Leatherstocking Tales," Natty Bumppo, to become the enduring prototypical hero of the Western narrative, Bumppo's legacy and manly characteristics lived on in the mind of literate Americans throughout the nineteenth century, embodied in a variety of new, fictional characters. Within Bumppo, readers found a character that, like them, was in a state of conflict between civilized restraint and natural freedom. Simultaneously straddling both camps, Bumppo epitomized the best of both worlds. He was well-spoken, rational, educated, and civilized, but he was also a rugged man of action, violence, and courage. He could handle himself in a delicate social position, but never felt fully comfortable in the confines of civilization. It was in the wilderness that his ethos blossomed – yet he was ever the civilized man of the wilderness. In the pursuit of justice, Bumppo did not feel restrained by society's standards of legality or morality.

From Bumppo grew an impressive list of impersonators who embodied Bumppo's manly characteristics in a new era and in new, more modern, situations. In this way, the hero of the Western narrative continued to provide the formula for American men who sought out manly methods for coping with the challenges of modernity. Pennsylvania-born Daniel Boone was such a figure. He was remembered as a Moses figure, notably in George Caleb Bingham's famous 1852 painting, *Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers Through the Cumberland Gap.* After his death, Davy Crockett underwent a significant transformation in the public's eye as fact and fiction blurred to create a Bumppo-like character who proclaimed to "walk like an ox, run like a fox, swim like an eel, yell like an Indian, fight like a devil, and spout like an earthquake, make love like a mad bull, and swallow a nigger whole without choking if you butter his head and pin his ears back."[23] Crockett's death at the Alamo served to sanctify his revised reputation. Stories of men like Boone and Crockett, or Seth Jones, Buffalo Bill, and Deadwood Dick, soon began

appearing within the cheap paperback "dime novels" that were popularized with the invention of the steam-powered printing press in the mid-1800s. In these volumes, truth and fiction blended to create a myth stronger than either. "Dime novels" were formulaic in content, easily imitated, and mass-produced by a corps of writers who churned out new books at a rate of one every three days.[24] Over time, parts of the narrative evolved to reflect reader's interests and the changing conditions on the frontier. For example, within dime novels, the hero's profession evolved to reflect the frontier's development—the frontiersman gave way to the hunter-scout, the ranger, and the cowboy. Owen Wister's laconic, incorruptible *Virginian* even took the image into higher literature. Frederic Remington's paintings rendered the western heroes masterfully. The figure took on elements of a knight errant, without becoming 'too civilized.' While components of the narrative changed, the characteristics embodied by its heroes remained largely the same, a point made clear by author John G. Cawelti in his groundbreaking structural analysis of the Western narrative, *The Six-Gun Mystique*.[25] Furthermore, the frontier remained the most popular setting for dime novels. Between 1860 and 1898, more than two-thirds of the 3,158 titles published by the powerhouse, Beadle and Adams, were situated on the frontier.[26] Even though Turner announced the death of the frontier in 1893, in the minds of literate Eastern Americans who continued to read dime novels and the Western-themed novels and films that followed in the twentieth century, the setting and heroic characters of the Western narrative were very much alive.

While popular culture was replete with tales of the heroic (and oft exaggerated) adventures of fictional and non-fictional heroes, three prominent easterners used the example of their own personal transformations to blur the boundaries separating the myth of the frontier in literature from the reality of the frontier in life. In so doing, these three men, Theodore Roosevelt, artist Frederick Remington, and writer Owen Wister, introduced to new audiences the masculine ethos of the western frontier. Born within three years of each other into prominent families and

each a graduate of an elite university (Harvard, Yale, and their peer institutions), as teens or young adults these three men each abandoned their heritage in order to explore the frontier and later chronicled and published their experiences. Years later, as each attained greatness within his profession and transferred his popularity into influence, Roosevelt, Remington, and Wister would each attribute their successes to the their experiences in the west, whereby becoming the living, breathing embodiment of the Western narrative hero. For the many Americans who saw these men as role models, the myth and transformative powers of the frontier became a reality.[27]

In his childhood, Theodore Roosevelt famously was the most unlikely of advocates for western living. He described himself as asthmatic, his body "sickly, delicate."[28] During a physical examination while an undergraduate at Harvard, Roosevelt was diagnosed with "heart trouble" and was advised to lead a sedentary life. His doctor, Dudley A. Sargent, even recommended he take care not to run up stairs. After the tragic loss of his wife and mother on the same day in 1884, Roosevelt abandoned New York and his family to live and work as a rancher in the Dakotas. Thus Roosevelt faced tragedy by journeying into the wilderness. The next three years proved to be a critical test of his manhood and Roosevelt would shed his identity as an effete easterner, and scion of the establishment, transforming himself into a tough westerner. After flooring a bully with a well-placed punch, Roosevelt began to fit in with the ranchers. He learned to hunt and track wild, exotic, and dangerous animals. In heroic fashion, he helped capture a local gang of desperadoes. Even after he returned to New York in 1886, Roosevelt's experiences in the west would continue to shape him and direct the shape of his work—as author of books on topics including hunting, ranching, exploration, and wildlife; as president of the Boone and Crockett Club, conservationist, sports hunter, and advocate of "the strenuous life": as Rough Rider during the Spanish-American War; and as America's first "cowboy president." An appreciation of the West and its traditions, Roosevelt believed, would help to cultivate, as he wrote, "that vigorous

manliness for the lack of which in a nation, as in an individual, the possession of no other qualities can possibly atone."[29]

Frederic Remington and Owen Wister, like Roosevelt, went west to escape. For Remington, the west brought freedom to pursue his artistic dreams without the ridicule of an overbearing and controlling mother. For Wister, the west represented escape from a life of careerism. Both men found what they were looking for and much more. They found in the west a laboratory for manhood, each transforming themselves into cowboys. The west also directly influenced their artistry: Remington as a painter and sculptor, Wister as an author. Borrowing characters, adventures, and settings from dime novelists, Remington and Wister popularized a modern version of the Western formula just as the frontier seemed to be disappearing.

Remington devoted himself to the cult of masculinity and, believing that manliness developed in his struggle with nature, reflected this transformation in his paintings. His works, like *Friend or Foe* (1895) or *Downing the Nigh Leader* (1907), often depicted an isolated man or beleaguered small group, alone in the barren west, pitted against hostile Indians in a hostile environment. Or, switching the code, the artworks celebrated the masculine toughness of the Indian – thereby, through inference, the equal ruggedness of the cowboy or cavalryman. Paintings such as *Dash for the Timber* (1889)*, Through the Smoke Sprang the Daring Soldier* (1897)*,* or *The Parley* (1898) made it clear that the west was no place for weaklings or tenderfeet. Through the American male triumphant over these forms of savagery and wildness, Remington reiterated in his paintings the characteristics of the masculine ideal.

Wister's most successful writing came in the 1902 best-seller, *The Virginian*, the most influential and widely read of all western novels. In the text, Wister reiterated his own transformative experiences in the West through his nameless protagonist. The book details a series of tests of manhood. At first, the hero is tasked with capturing and bringing justice to a band of thieves led by his best friend. There is no conflict of interest, no hesitation as he strings

his friend up, as in the Virginian's moral code, honor, courage, and strength are more important than any bond of family or friend. Later, he confronts the outlaw Trampas and shoots him dead in a dual in the street of Medicine Bow. The Virginian's greatest feat of manliness comes in his courtship of Molly Wood, the eastern-born schoolteacher. He convinces her to abandon the sentimental attachments standard among eastern elite and accept his moral code and rule of honor that grows out of necessity in the west. He shows the superiority of his western code to the constructed artificiality of her eastern code, and thus codifies the West as the most American venue. Since Mormons were, nearly by definition, western, this point of view was one they could understand reflexively. When given two contrasting philosophies for life, Wister concludes that a step "backwards" into the wild, rough west is actually a step forward for masculinity.

Thus, through the workings of men like Roosevelt, Remington, and Wister, a new masculine ideal was established that celebrated individualism, courage, and physical and moral strength. This new vision of masculinity celebrated men who sought regeneration in the open spaces of the West, who threw off the shackles of progress and sought to establish harmony between the forces of savagery and civilization, and who did not shy away from violence in the pursuit of his vision of the moral right. These men, Roosevelt, Remington, and Wister as well as the fictitious characters of popular culture, demonstrated that masculine metamorphosis was possible—not just in the West, but *because* of the West. As this vision of masculinity rooted in the Western narrative rose in prominence, popularity, and in mythic appeal, it would find a home in the decades that followed in countless Western novels and films that would continue to propagate to the American public this ideal. And, as I demonstrate in the remainder of this chapter, Mormon leaders recognized in the popularity of this reiteration of masculinity, an opportunity to establish a new version of masculinity for Mormon men.

Muscular Prophets: Past and Present

In the aftermath of what religious historian Stephen Prothero called the "feminization of American religion" that occurred during the 1700s, new, more rigid gender roles reassigned men and women to separate spheres of influence and power. Men were responsible for the public realm, the politicking and business affairs that occurred outside of the home. Women, on the other hand, became responsible for overseeing the home and the education and upbringing of the children. Within the cult of domesticity, women rose as powerful agents in homes, churches, and society who directly shaped the character and minds of the rising generation. When they taught, women emphasized aspects of Christianity that best reaffirmed the virtues that they, as women, held to be important: feminine traits. Thus, Christ's crucifixion, though tragic and violent, was taught in those terms but instead as the ultimate demonstration of humility, sacrifice, and submission. Instead of drawing insight from Christ's violent eviction of the money-changers from the temple, women stressed teachings from the Sermon on the Mount with its promised blessings for the meek, not the strong.

As a result of this growing feminization of American religion, Christ was feminized both, as shown above, through his teachings but also in popular artistic representations. Enter the delicately-featured Jesus with soft, long auburn tresses. Religious leaders humanized Christ, stressing his most human characteristics and experiences with hopes that members of the congregation would develop the same characteristics within themselves. Christ, they taught, was the product of a divine father *and* a human mother. Because of Mary's nurturing and rearing, he understood the plight of women. He experienced the same emotions, feelings, and sentiments as did other church members. He was sensitive, soft, and emotional and to prove this, one only need turn to John 11:35, the shortest verse of the Bible, where we read, "Jesus wept." These traits carried over into artist's depictions of Christ, who captured him as Revered William Barton

described, a "wan, weak figure"—"an impotent Christ."[30] Barton concluded artists must have collaborated through the ages before universally agreeing, "We will make our Christ with a woman's face, and add a beard."[31] At the turn of the twentieth century, American men, especially within Mormonism, derided such effeminacy and re-masculinized Christ's body and character to make him an appropriate role-model for a new vision of masculinity.

Writing in the *Juvenile Instructor* in 1904, George Reynolds, a Mormon General Authority who had in 1875 served as the test defendant in the *Reynolds v. United States* Supreme Court case, penned an op-ed piece entitled "The Personal Appearance of the Savior." Decrying Victorian Era artists' representations of an effeminate and weak looking Jesus Christ, or as Herman Melville had described "the soft, curled, hermaphroditical" Jesus, Reynolds described Christ's physical characteristics and demeanor for LDS readers.[32] Drawing from a religious tradition established upon the belief of a living Christ who had and would continue to appear to his servants and reveal his will to the officials of His Church, Reynolds was in such an authoritative leadership position as to elicit belief among members that he spoke, not from hearsay, but from personal experience.

Reynolds begins by ridiculing artists, past and present, for their "foolish inaccuracies" while attempting to produce physically and historically precise representations of Christ. These artists depicted Christ as an "effeminate and sentimental young man with long flowing locks, a weakling in body and with few traces on his face of the strength of character within" who was "marching through the streets of a German village, or seated by an Italian villa with the utmost complacency." "All this," Reynolds rebukes, "is wrong." Instead, he insists, Christ's body and face should manifest the "perfect vitality" of his lineage. In his description of Christ, it is important to quote Reynolds at length:

> There would be no signs of a torpid liver, an inactive stomach, or a weak heart. He would be vigorous, deep chested, broad shouldered man, with well-cut

> features and above the medium height, with his bodily energies developed through a life of youthful labor in Joseph's carpenter shop at Nazareth. It must be admitted, without argument, that if Jesus inherited any predisposition or tendency to bodily weakness or disease, which we do not believe, it must have come from his mother's side—to think otherwise is absurd.[33]

As the American culture, religion, and society grew increasingly feminized, Reynolds felt, like many religious leaders of the day, the need to reclaim Christ from these effeminate influences. Reynolds states that the Christ of Mormonism was a masculine Christ. In a Church that was uniquely placed among Christianity for its belief in continued revelation and modern prophets who spoke face-to-face with Christ, this description of the physical characteristics and demeanor held special sway in the minds of believers.[34]

For such a change to take root, the Church needed to change more than just the image of Christ. The Church also sought to reverse trends in growing feminization by establishing a new, more muscular, and more masculine image of its leaders, both past and present. Using select and uncelebrated stories that were not widely circulated among the Church's members, this new image was derived from and stressed specific characteristics common in the western narrative hero, popularized through American culture, and synonymous with masculinity.

One leader who underwent a significant reimagining was Joseph Smith. Historian Kathleen Flake suggests that after the ban on polygamy, one way that Mormon leaders reconceptualized Mormon history and doctrine was by emphasizing Joseph Smith's First Vision—Joseph's account of being visited by God the Father and Jesus Christ—when, in previous decades, this event was not a topic of great discussion. According to historian James B. Allen, author of the most extensive study on this topic, "[the First Vision] was not a matter of common knowledge, even among church members, in the earliest years of Mormon history."[35] Not until the first decade of the twentieth century, as Flake documents, was Smith's story widely publicized: in Sunday School texts (1905), in priesthood instruction manuals (1909), as a missionary tract (1910), and in the histories of the Church (1912).[36] This reconceptualization of

Mormon history demonstrates that their telling of history is not static, but is, in part, a byproduct of their response to very specific and pressing cultural concerns and influences. It also shows how the Church itself will reconsider and recalibrate its sacred traditions – again, belying the faulty idea that Mormonism is or could ever be static. Just as it was important for the church, in the aftermath of the ban on polygamy, to reconfirm the Church's commitment to the doctrine of continuing revelation by placing emphasis on Smith's First Vision, so too was it important for the Church to reconfirm the importance of masculinity by locating, celebrating, and preaching manly role models.

In addition to the First Vision, another way Church leaders sought to fashion a new image of Smith was through stressing his frontier characteristics: his physique, strength, and athleticism. Today, Joseph Smith is widely remember and celebrated, as evidenced by church historian Alexander L. Baugh aptly titled chapter, "Joseph Smith's Athletic Nature," for "his love of rigorous physical activity, his participation in individual athletic contests, and his demonstration of various feats of strength which existed in antebellum America."[37] An examination of historical sources confirms these findings. By all accounts, Joseph Smith was a frontier-like character and he *should* be considering his life was spent on the American frontier! What I find most significant though is that beginning around 1890 and becoming especially pronounced in the first decade of the 1900s, these frontier characteristics were taught, stressed and praised among members of the Church unlike ever before and thus are indicative of a changing focus in the Church. [38]

Born in Sharon, Vermont in 1805 to Joseph and Lucy Mack Smith, the Smiths were a farming family and, like many in early America, young Joseph grew up working the land. In 1816-17, his family relocated to a small community in western New York named Palmyra where they bought a 100-acre farm. After establishing the LDS Church in 1830, Smith travel widely across the states and territories of the frontier, building up communities in Ohio, Illinois, and Missouri. By all accounts, Smith was a physical specimen. He was taller than average and had a

strength, energy, and vitality that was unmatched. Even so, in their attempts to add color to his description, biographers took liberties. Take, for example, this physical description of Joseph Smith as written by his biographer, George Q. Cannon, in 1888. Cannon describes Smith as a rugged, masculine man.

> [H]e was . . . a man of great physical beauty and stateliness. He was just six feet in height, standing in his stockings, and was grandly proportioned. In his mature years he weighed about two hundred pounds. His eyes were blue and tender; his hair was brown, plentiful and wavy; he wore no beard, and his complexion was one of transparency so rare as to be remarkable; the exquisite clearness of his skin was never clouded, his face being naturally almost without hair. His carriage was erect and graceful; he moved always with an air of dignity and power which strangers often called kingly. He was full of physical energy and daring. Without any appearance of effort he could perform astonishing feats of strength and agility; and without any apparent thought of fear he met and smiled upon every physical danger. From his boyhood up he was fond of athletics, and in his mature years and at the very zenith of his fame he loved to unbend and wrestle or jump with a friend. The men who could contest with him were very few. When his situation would permit he was happy as a school boy to join in manly sports.[39]

In another section of the same biography, Cannon again noted Smith's physical size and build. Of Smith, Cannon wrote, "When he had achieved the prime of his manhood, he seemed to combine all attractions and excellences. His physical person was the fit habitation of his exalted spirit."[40]

From Joseph Smith's physical size grew tales of his accomplishments as an athlete in contests involving human strength and athletic prowess. In fact, given the story of his life, it was no stretch whatsoever to imagine the Prophet as tough and strong: he was. Today, as evidenced by numerous written accounts from both within the Church and without, these stories have remained relevant as windows into the humanness of a man who is all but deified within the faith. While these stories were first recorded in newspaper accounts, in personal journals, in letters, and in a variety of other formats, the fact that they were popularized and celebrated at the turn of the century is evident of the Church's efforts to refashion Joseph Smith as a frontier prophet and masculine role model for a new generation of men.

In these accounts, Joseph Smith faces off against an opponent (occasionally hostile, but typical in a friendly competition) and the men are tasked with throwing the other from a circle. In one such story, after five months of confinement in a Missouri jail, Smith is handed over to a group of ruffians. One of the men, who happens to be the champion wrestler of the county, challenges Smith to a wrestling match and promises not to get mad if Smith wins. Feeling the physical repercussions of months in confinement, Smith declines the invitation. The ruffian continues to bait him, until Joseph relents and agrees to the match. After several failed attempts by the Missourian to get a hold on Smith or throw him from the ring, the ruffian turns to trickery but fails. Smith then went on the offensive, picked the man up, and threw him on his back into a puddle of water. Despite the promise to not retaliate, the sounds of laughter and mocking infuriated the beaten man who lashed out and tried to attack Smith. He was restrained by the other guards and eventually the hostility passed.

While stories of Joseph Smith's physical exploits vary from one record to the next (the settings, opponent, and even the sport differ), the stories often share similar narrative components and teach a similar moral principle. In these stories, Smith often assumes the role of the trickster as he is challenged by larger and, supposedly, more accomplished wrestlers (like the Missourian above, or, in another record from 1904, by a John Brassfield "the champion wrestler of the country"[41]). In folktales, the trickster is an archetypal character who, when navigating through conflict, relies upon his wits and cleverness to avoid physical confrontations and still come off victorious over his foes. In most accounts, Smith's wits and cleverness are not manifested in his ability to *avoid* conflict, but in his ability to trick people into *entering* conflict, wherein Smith can come off victor through his physical superiority.

When Professor Willard Done described Joseph Smith for an article in the December 1905 edition of the *Improvement Era*, he began by emphasizing Smith's physical strength and activity. According to Done's description, Smith excelled in "running, wrestling, jumping and

manly games" and was "always ready for a good-natured frolic." While others would use their physical superiority to gain undue advantage over others, Smith never did, instead "manifest[ing] in his actions the tenderness and gentleness which . . . softens it and sanctifies it to the good of mankind." Done made clear though that, despite this softness, Smith was "no pale ascetic, mortifying the body, and wasting it away by long fasts and secret vigils."[42]

After stressing Smith's physicality, Professor Done described his characteristics, stressing those that were manly in nature and common in the heroes of the western narrative. He related a story of a time Smith was wrongly jailed and subjected to a variety of physical and verbal abuse. Using vile language, the prisons guards bragged throughout the night of the physical and sexual abuses they had committed upon Smith's friends, family, and followers in nearby Far West. Asserting the "magnificent manliness of his nature," Smith arose to his feet and "spoke in a voice of thunder, or as the roaring lion, uttering . . . 'Silence, ye fiends of the infernal pit! In the name of Jesus Christ, I rebuke you and command you to be still; I will not live another minute and hear such language. Cease such talk, or you or I die this instant.'" The men shrunk into a corner, asked his forgiveness, and spoke not again. Quoting Parley P. Pratt, Done wrote, "I have tried to conceive of kings, of royal courts, of thrones and crowns, and of emperors assembled to decide the fate of kingdoms; but dignity and majesty have I seen but once, as it stood in chains, at midnight, in a dungeon, in an obscure village in Missouri."[43] Speaking of Joseph's bravery and courage in the midst of danger, Done points to Smith death as an act of willingly sacrificing his own life. In his description, Done does not embellish the truth as much as he hand-selects characteristics his audience and contemporaries would see as indicative of heroic and manly.

Some critics, even in Joseph's lifetime, felt such shenanigans as wrestling to be unbecoming of a man who claimed to be a prophet. Some, like Charlotte Haven from New Hampshire, who heard Joseph talk about his adventures, was taken aback by his demeanor and

playfulness. She described Joseph as "coarse." When asked about his playfulness, Smith shared a story about a prophet who sat resting in the shade of the tree. When a hunter reproved him, the prophet asked the hunter if he kept bow strung up all the time. The hunter replied, "no," and explained how the bow would lose it elasticity if he did. The prophet said it was the same for his mind, "he did not want it strung up all the time."[44] Speaking at a Sunday evening memorial service for Joseph Smith on December 23, 1894, Joseph F. Smith argued that Joseph's fondness for wrestling, racing, or "having a good scuffle with some lusty neighbor or friend" need not "detract one iota from the great and glorious principles which were revealed through him to the world."[45] He then responded by recounting his own memory of playing marbles with a friend when Joseph Smith burst through a door holding a man named Josiah Butterfield by the shirt. Butterfield had sat in the company of the Prophet and had repeatedly insulted him until he could handle the abuse no longer. Smith promptly lifted Butterfield off the ground and kicked him to the sidewalk. Joseph F. Smith declared to those who would witness this scene and question Smith's calling as a prophet of God:

Some would be shocked beyond measure to think that the man who beheld the face of God and the face of His son Jesus Christ . . . and who had been entrusted with the great mission of restoring the great revelation of salvation to the earth for the last time, should be seen to kick a man out of his house that was abusing him. But he was tried beyond endurance many a time by false brethren, by false accusers, by malicious persons, by wicked men, by mobs and murderers, and evil creatures that sought his life from the day that he received his first message from God until the day they succeeded in taking his precious life from the earth. There was never a moment of his life that he was free from such things as these, being hounded, and abused, and insulted by wicked men; and he had been less a man if he had not kicked Josiah Butterfield out of his house on that day.[46]

The message Joseph F. Smith left with this congregation of Saints on that Sunday evening in 1904 was that the Prophet Joseph Smith was a man—a noble, courageous, and just man—whose love of sports and wrestling did not detract from his mission, but provided a masculine role model "brimming over with the noblest and purest of human nature."[47]

Joseph Smith: Leg Surgery

In other instances, Joseph Smith's childhood was used to exemplify the courage that would later define his adult years. One story that gained traction in the public's imagining of Smith was that of a childhood illness that necessitated surgery. According to the recollections of Luck Mack Smith, Joseph's mother, sometime between 1812 and 1813 typhoid fever swept through their community and family. Six-year-old Joseph was sick for two weeks. A sore formed in his armpit and infection eventually spread to the bone of his lower left leg. After Joseph complained of constant pain for weeks, the Smiths summoned doctors who eventually proposed amputation as the only viable option to save his life. The Smith family refused, instead pleading with doctors to first try to cut out the infected portion of the bone. To perform the surgery, the doctors insisted on binding Joseph to the table. Joseph refused. His mother reported him saying, "No, doctor, I will not be bound, for I can bear the operation much better if I have my liberty." The doctors offered Joseph brandy to help with the pain. Joseph again refused, saying, "I will not touch one particle of liquor, neither will I be tied down; but I will tell you what I will do—I will have my father sit on the bed and hold me in his arms and then I will do whatever is necessary in order to have the bone taken out." The doctors bore into the bone at the site of the infection and, using forceps, broke off three pieces. Hearing Joseph's screams, Lucy Mack rushed into the room to see blood gushing from the wound and Joseph's face pale as a corpse. Despite his agony and the excruciating pain, Joseph still, thinking only of his mother's well-being, cried out when she entered the room, "Oh, mother, go back, go back; I do not want you to come in—I will try to tough it out, if you will go away."[48] After the surgery, the infection left and Joseph's body slowly mended. From age seven to ten, Joseph was either confined to a bed or hobbled around on crutches. He would walk with a slight limp for the rest of his life.[49] This tale's power is

unsurprising to anyone familiar with similar stories, from the ancient Brave Spartan Boy and the Fox to the contemporaneous account of Theodore Roosevelt's triumph over sickliness.

Until recently, the only known source to detail the events of this surgery was Lucy Mack Smith's account, which she penned with the help of Martha Jane Knowlton Coray, a Nauvoo schoolteacher, in1845 but did not publish until 1853, about thirty-five years after the actual event occurred. Joseph Smith's first-hand account of this event, which, like his mother's, was written decades after the surgery, was never published and only recently unearthed. The near universal knowledge of this surgery among members of the Church is therefore a testament to the narrative power of Lucy Mack Smith's story. When her biography was first published, it was met with hostility by Joseph Smith's successor, Brigham Young, who declared the book to be a "tissue of lies" and, in 1865, ordered the church members to have their copies destroyed.[50] According to Brigham Young's allegations, at the time of the history's writing, Luck Mack Smith could "scarcely recollect anything correctly that had transpired" and Martha Coray, the composer, had aspirations of becoming a "novel writer."[51]

It was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that the Church began to republish, albeit in a revised and edited format, Lucy Mack Smith's recollections of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Beginning in November 1901, the Church began releasing a revised serialized version of Lucy Mack Smith's record, section by section, month by month, in the Church's *Improvement Era*. In his introduction to the project, newly-sustained Church President and *IE* editor, Joseph F. Smith, described how some of Lucy Smith's original statements were "overdrawn" and had been published "without revision and without the consent or knowledge of President Young." Of these errors, President Joseph F. Smith described the Church leaders as being "greatly disappointed" at having to "temporarily suppress its further circulation." A committee was appointed consisting of Apostle George A. Smith and Judge Elias Smith, Joseph's cousins and men familiar with the Smith family, to "revise and correct the original work." This work was completed and delivered

to Joseph F. Smith prior to George A. Smith's death in 1875 and now, in 1901 and 1902, was being published within the official periodical of the Church.[52]

In January 1902, the *Improvement Era* carried the account of Joseph's leg surgery, giving many readers their first glance into the character and early life of the Prophet. The story was again reprinted in the *IE* in December 1905, as part of a special edition celebrating the one-hundred year anniversary of Joseph Smith's birth. Within this issue, Church President Joseph F. Smith wrote a short, biographical sketch of the Uncle called "Joseph Smith as a Boy." In his writing, Joseph F. Smith used the story of the leg surgery to illustrate that even at an early age, Joseph "possessed the foundation principles of good character—filial affection, patience, endurance, and courage."[53] It was this final adjective, "courage," that Smith repeated over and over in his description of the events surrounding the surgery. When Joseph objected to the doctor's insistence on binding him to a bed, he answered "courageously." When Joseph told his mother to leave the room, that he would be safe in the arms of his father, Joseph demonstrated "endurance," "patience in suffering," "self-reliance," "love of liberty," "temperance," and, above all else, "courage." In this account, Joseph F. Smith not only praises the boy's character and virtue, but suggests to his young audience, boys in search of masculine role models to help them navigate the challenges of their day, that by developing these characteristics while still in their youth, they would have the building blocks for success in manhood. As he writes, "these traits and virtues which the boy exhibited are the foundation principles of true character; and, belong to the boy, they became second nature in the man. Such childhood is the basis of such manhood."[54]

Preaching Manliness from the Podium

Between the years 1890 and 1920, Latter-day Saint authorities also used the podium at General Conference to deliver speeches in which they repeatedly laid out their vision for the new Mormon male, a vision patterned after the characteristics found in the hero of the Western narrative. Within these speeches, leaders specified characteristics Mormon men should seek to develop. Drawing upon masculine characteristics popularized in the western narrative and embraced by the Protestant muscular Christianity movement, these speeches allowed Mormon leaders, just as Amy Hoyt and Sara Patterson have shown in their analysis of these leaders' articles in the *Improvement Era* and *Juvenile Instructor*, to "offer up their newly refashioned masculinity for outsider scrutiny and insider considerations."[55]

General Conference was more than just an opportunity to speak to the collective church, but leaders also recognized an opportunity to enhance Mormonism's public image.[56] In my analysis of the public rhetoric of Mormon leaders in General Conference, I recognized a shift in their ideology and rhetoric during these decades, which differed in content and delivery from that of previous decades. These shifts are indicative of institutional concerns that may have derived from challenges within the Church, outside the Church, or, as is far more likely when considering the historical developments previously outlined, a combination from both. For example, according to the "Corpus of General Conference," an online database that allows users to search through over one hundred and seventy years of General Conference addresses, there was a statistical uptick in the number of instances wherein Church leaders referenced specific masculine characteristics or terms associated in the public's mind with masculinity during the decades between 1890 and 1920. For example, speakers at General Conference used the word "brave" 43 times in the 1910s, the most of any decade within the history of the Church. Other synonyms like bold, courageous, valiant, heroic, and fearless also all have statistical upticks in their usage during

the years between 1890 and 1920, as compared to previous or later decades. An examination of these shifts provides evidence of how the Church responded to challenges and how they expected members to respond. Thus far, this chapter has explored various methods by which the Church propagated a new vision for Mormon masculinity—through reimagining Christ, Joseph Smith, and other leaders as new, more masculine, religious role models. Within this section, I examine how this new masculine ideal was disseminated to the Church from the podium.

One of the more common methods of stressing characteristics of masculinity was in modern leaders' descriptions of previous Mormon prophets, resurrecting their bodies and actions into laboratories for the new ideal. Just as mainstream Protestant leaders deplored the pallid and effete Jesus, preferring a hardier savior, so too did LDS leaders stress the undeniable ruggedness of their predecessors, whose manliness was proven in the Western crucible that all Americans so admired. For example, when Apostle J. Golden Kimball addressed the Saints in 1905, he spoke of Joseph Smith and testified of the importance of his ministry. Kimball then applied a modern masculine reading onto Smith, honoring him "for his bravery, for his courage, for his manliness."[57]

Prophets besides Joseph Smith were also used to teach masculine traits. In an address, Anthon Lund described Brigham Young as a "courageous man."[58] In 1905, John Henry Smith described Brigham Young as coming from a "heroic mold."[59] Charles H. Hart described Elder Heber J. Grant as "courageous" after delivering a speech on temperance.[60] Joseph F. Smith was labeled a "manly man."[61] J. Golden Kimball, an Apostle celebrated among Latter-day Saints for being rough around the edges and swearing during his speeches, related a story from his childhood to illustrate how he was brought up. Kimball described learning to fight behind the barn. The boys would put wood chips on each other's shoulders and try to knock them off, an activity that often led to blows. When young Kimball asked the ringleader why he encouraged the

other boys to play like this, he was told it was all part of the "training" and "it makes you tough."[62]

In 1891, George Q. Cannon spoke at length about the trials faced by leaders of the Old Testament in order to compare them to the present. Cannon reminded his audience that Daniel was thrown into a den of lions for praying. The "three Hebrew children," Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were tossed into a fiery furnace for refusing to deny their faith. Cannon described these men as "heroic," for standing true in the face of death to their principles and beliefs. Then, Cannon questioned the heroism of his audience, wondering if they too, if placed in a similar scenario, would display the same level of fortitude, the fortitude "consistent with our professions as Latter-day Saints." Within this context, Cannon then connected the courage of the past with the leaders of the present, declaring, "I have no earthly doubt that if President [Wilford] Woodruff had been required to go into the lions' den or into the fiery furnace, or to do anything else in the way of sacrificing his life in order to save this people, he would have done it." Taking this point one-step further, Cannon also described Woodruff's predecessor, John Taylor, with similar language, stating: "I have not a shadow of a doubt that President Taylor would have done the same."[63] In this manner, Cannon retrofitted Church leaders of the past into the masculine mold of the present, whereby describing the manner of men Mormons ought to be. Parenthetically, this trend would play directly into the acceptability of sports at Brigham Young University (then, Academy), where football began in 1896, with the full support of church and academy leaders.

Leaders also directly equated masculinity with belief and membership. In this way of thinking, to be Mormon was to be masculine. The act of believing, of rejecting the trends of the world, of standing firm in one's faith despite what others said, required a special type of man, one equipped with masculine characteristics. For example, when Joseph F. Smith addressed men in 1903, he described how easy it must be to not be a Mormon or, as he described, "to swim with the currents of the world." But to be a Mormon, required a "special bravery" to swim against the

currents. “When a man makes up his mind to forsake the world and its follies and sins, and identify himself with God’s people . . . it takes courage, manhood, independence of character, superior intelligence, and a determination that is not common among men.”[64]

This association of masculinity and righteousness was also evident in the way Church leaders stressed the importance of new religious ideals. Although Joseph Smith had revealed the Word of Wisdom, the Mormon health code which instructed believers to, among other things, abstain from alcohol, tobacco, tea, and coffee, in 1833, it was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that the Word of Wisdom became more than a set of suggestions, but a commandment. To reiterate the new significance the Church placed on this doctrine, Church leaders used the rhetoric of masculinity to encourage men to abstain. Those who smoked or drank, were described as being slaves to their passions. It took strength and courage to quit. In 1901, Marriner W. Merrill called out those boys who thought “it is manly to profane and to frequent saloons.”[65] Such actions were not of God, and most certainly not “manly.” George Teasdale spoke of young men who smoke. “They think it manly to smoke.” To them Teasdale maintained, “It is manly to resist evil and to do right; it is manly to . . . overcome our bad dispositions.”[66]

Finally, Church leaders described missionary work through a vision of masculinity. Beginning in the early twentieth century, the responsibility of sharing the gospel fell more heavily than in times past upon the shoulders of the Church’s young men. In the opinions of many speakers at General Conference, to declare the word required masculine characteristics like bravery or courage, as the act of sharing the gospel with nonbelievers was often met with hostility and the threat of violence.[67] This was as true for members wanting to share the gospel with friends as it was for missionaries sent out into the world to minister. Thus, to be a missionary was to be manly.

When George F. Richards spoke from the Tabernacle podium in 1909, he rebuked the congregation for their cowardice. Sensing a lack of missionary fervor among Church members, Richards called for a renewed emphasis to be placed on sharing the gospel through associating the act with masculinity. "I sometimes think that we neglect our duty as teachers to our fellow men," said Richards, ". . . because of cowardice. We are not as bold and courageous as we might be."[68] Francis M. Lyman expressed similar sentiments when he called upon parents and leaders to train their boys better to become missionaries when they grew older. Speaking of the type of training boys needed to become successful missionaries, Lyman insisted on describing the ideal missionary through the lens of the ideal masculine man. Lyman rebuked parents and leaders to ensure every boy was "made a gentleman, a *manly* man, prepared to go out into the world with strength of character and the determination to do what is right, to represent the people of God, and to represent the Savior." Lyman is not clear in how parents are to do this or which specific characteristics they should encourage their young men to discover, but he is clear young men are to become "manly" and have "strength of character."[69] When J. Golden Kimball broached the topic of missionary work, he likewise directed parents to teach their young boys to become manly men, the type of men who would willingly risk their lives in order to share the gospel with others. Alluding to those men from the New Testament, Book of Mormon, and modern Church history who suffered violence and the loss of life, Kimball asked young men to enter the mission field with knowledge of the gravity of their calling yet courageous enough to do what was expected. He stressed characteristics of masculinity, ". . . we must have some very brave and courageous men" before concluding, "the gospel will never be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue and people without lives being lost."[70]

Conclusion

Between the years 1890 and 1920, members of Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were faced with pressures internal and external. They were forced to reevaluate portions of their theology that had hitherto served to directly define their religious and gender identity. Within this shifting environment, these members sought out avenues that would allow them to blur boundaries that separated their faith from the religious mainstream, without turning away from the distinctiveness which made their Church unique. In so doing, these Mormons found in their marital practices and in the performance of their gender, an opportunity to realign their religion and gender expectations with that of the rest of American society. In a very real sense, members of this community experienced an identity crisis—individually and collectively. At the heart of this crisis was questions about the infallible nature of prophecy, the eternal nature of polygamy, and the associated gender roles entrenched by their understanding of religious doctrine and informed by cultural practice. Yet, as Latter-day Saints abandoned the martial practices that defined them as righteous, God-fearing men and women and embraced the sexual and marital practices of the American religious mainstream, the group enjoyed new respectability. Along the way, Latter-day Saint leaders tried to persuade the male membership to embrace these new norms by refashioning the model of Mormon masculinity. Yet, in the ways Church leaders encouraged Mormon males to align themselves with the values of the larger American culture, we see the influence of the Western narrative in prescribing the ideal masculinity to Mormon males.

As Mormons reconstructed masculinity around the practice of monogamy, they placed the burden of the refashioned religious identity almost exclusively upon men and their bodies. In the end, the new religious identity only helped to further their alliances with their Protestant contemporaries, paving the way for them to claim a stake in *American* identity. The new parameters of this identity proved not just acceptable, but positively admirable, to a mainstream

American culture which had only recently been patently hostile to the LDS. The new Mormon man, invented on the pages of the Western narrative and slowly embraced by church members, ushered the LDS church into the American mainstream while maintaining an acceptable difference from that mainstream culture. From 1890 to 1920, Mormons reconstructed a model of masculinity that both affirmed their sense of being part of God's chosen people and allowed them to claim an identity as Americans.

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[1] Doyle L. Green, "*The Improvement Era*—The Voice of the Church (1897-1970)." *The Improvement Era* 73 (Nov. 1970): 12-20.

[2] Heber J. Grant, "Work, and Keep Your Promises." *Improvement Era* 3, 3 (January 1900), 196-7. For more on the "Strenuous Life" championed by Theodore Roosevelt and others at and around the turn of the twentieth century, read Theodore Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life: Essays and Addresses,* (The Century Co., 1902).

[3] Ibid, 196-7.

[4] For an excellent overview of the challenges American men faced at the turn of the twentieth century in the wake of industrialization and modernization, see John Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America*. (New York, Hill & Wang; 2001). For more on how military combat challenged popular perceptions of masculinity, see Kristine L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998).

[5] Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), pp. 121-256.

[6] For more criticism on the historiography of masculinity studies, see Bryce Traister, "Academic Viagra: The Rise of American Masculinity Studies." *American Quarterly* 52 (2000): 274-304. Traister notes that historians of masculinity have identified a crisis in masculinity at nearly every point in American history. These studies of American masculinity develop using a similar pattern, one in which men fail to live up to the hetero-masculine norm of the generally accepted masculinity narrative. These insufficiencies contribute to a growing sense of inadequacy as they fail to perform their masculinity properly. This sense of failure then translates into a larger sense of crisis within society. While this pattern summarizes my findings of Mormon masculinity at the turn of the twentieth century, I maintain the line drawn by Amy Hoyt and Sara Patterson that the term "'crisis' is an adequate description of what happened in the Mormon community." See Amy Hoyt and Sara Patterson, "Changing Gender Expectations in the Era of Transition from Polygamy to Monogamy, 1890-1920." *Gender & History* 23, no. 1 (April 2011): 87.

[7] Amy Hoyt and Sara Patterson, "Changing Gender Expectations in the Era of Transition from Polygamy to Monogamy, 1890-1920." *Gender & History* 23, no. 1 (April 2011): 73

[8] In contrast, between 1845 and 1888, only 31.8 percent of the Church's leadership participated in *monogamous* marriages. For more on Mormon polygamy statistics, see B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage*. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 16-

7; Kathryn M. Daynes, *More Wives than One: Transformation of the Mormon Marriage System, 1840-1910* (Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 2001), 72-3.

[9] As quoted in Richard Kimball, "“Muscular Mormonism." *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 25, no. 5 (2008): 551-2.

[10] Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History*, 2d edn. Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 1989), 98 as quoted in Richard Kimball, "Muscular Mormonism." *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 25, no. 5 (2008): 552.

[11] Ibid, 552.

[12] Ibid, 552.

[13] Amy Hoyt and Sara Peterson, "Changing Gender Expectations in the Era of Transition from Polygamy to Monogamy, 1890-1920." *Gender & History* 23. 1 (April 2011): 73

[14] Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1929), 405.

[15] Ann Braude, *Women and American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). See also Richard D. Shiels, "The Feminization of American Congregationalism, 1730-1835," *American Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 46-62.

[16] Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 1.

[17] Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 6.

[18] Ibid, 7.

[19] Ibid, 18.

[20] Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 1.

[21] Richard Kimball, "Muscular Mormonism." *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 25: 5: 550.

[22] Ibid, 550.

[23] Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), pg. 97 as quoted in Robert V. Hines and John Mack Faragher, *The American West: A New Interpretive History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 477.

[24] Robert V. Hines and John Mack Faragher, *The American West: A New Interpretive History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 478.

[25] John G. Cawelti, *The Six-Gun Mystique, Second Edition*. (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1984), 73-93.

[26] Robert V. Hines and John Mack Faragher, *The American West: A New Interpretive History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 478.

[27] For more on Roosevelt, Remington, and Wister's interactions with and attitudes toward the West, and more on these men influenced Eastern conceptions of the West, see G. Edward White, *The Eastern Establishment and the Western Experience: The West of Frederic Remington, Theodore Roosevelt, and Owen Wister* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968); Christine

Bold, *Selling the Wild West: Popular Western Fiction, 1860-1960* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); and Robert V. Hines and John Mack Faragher, *The American West: A New Interpretive History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), especially chapter 15: "The Myth of the West."

[28] Theodore Roosevelt, *An Autobiography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920).

[29] G. Edward White, *The Eastern Establishment and the Western Experience: The West of Frederic Remington, Theodore Roosevelt, and Owen Wister* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968), 91.

[30] William E. Barton, *Jesus of Nazareth* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1903) as quoted in Stephen Prothero, *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), 98.

[31] David Morgan, "Absent Fathers and Women with Beards: Religion and Gender in Popular Imagery of the Nineteenth Century," in David Holloway and John Beck, eds., *American Visual Cultures* (New York: Continuum, 2005) as quoted in Stephen Prothero, *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), 98.

[32] Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (New York: Bantam Classics, 1981), 394.

[33] George Reynolds, "The Personal Appearance of the Savior." *Juvenile Instructor* 39 (August 15, 1904): 498-499.

[34] In his book *American Jesus* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003) Stephen Prothero argues the masculinization of Christ occurred across many Christian denominations as a response to the general feminization of American culture and was heavily influenced by the Muscular Christianity. For more on the American masculinization of Christ, see especially Chapter 3: Manly Redeemer.

[35] James B. Allen, "Emergence of a Fundamental: The Expanding Role of Joseph Smith's First Vision in Mormon Religious Thought," *Journal of Mormon History* 7 (1980): 53.

[36] Kathleen Flake, "Re-Placing Memory: Latter-Day Saint Use of Historical Monuments and Narrative in the early Twentieth Century." *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 13, no. 1, (2003): 83.

[37] Alexander L. Baugh, "Joseph Smith's Athletic Nature," in Susan Easton Black and Charles D. Tate, Jr., eds., *Joseph Smith: The Prophet, The Man* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University's Religious Studies Center, 1993), 137.

[38] The frontier characteristics used to describe Joseph Smith have shaped the narrative by which modern Mormons remember Smith. For example, in a 1996 General Conference address entitled, "Joseph, the Man and the Prophet," Apostle Dallin H. Oaks describes Joseph as "a man of the frontier—young, emotional, dynamic, and so loved and approachable by his people that they often called him 'Brother Joseph.'" In recounting his life and contributions, Oaks describes Smith's leg surgery as a young boy, his courage in the face of verbal, legal, and physical attacks, the absence of role models, and his physical strength and fondness for physical activity.

[39] George Q. Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet*. (Salt Lake City, UT: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1888), 321-2.

[40] George Q. Cannon, *The Life of Joseph Smith, the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 19.

[41] "Special Correspondence from Caldwell County, Missouri." *Deseret Evening News*. September 10, 1904.

[42] Willard Done, "Joseph Smith as a Man." *Improvement Era* 9, no. 2 (December 1905), 114-6.

[43] Ibid, 117-8. Done is quoting a story told by Parley P. Pratt in Chapter 26 of his autobiography.

[44] "Recollections of the Prophet Joseph Smith." *Juvenile Instructor* 27 (August 1, 1892), 472.

[45] Joseph F. Smith, "Recollections of a Prophet." December 23, 1894.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (Liverpool: S.W. Richards for Orson Pratt, 1853).

[49] Richard Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), 21.

[50] Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 91.

[51] Quotes taken from Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 91-2. Shipps chapter "Getting the Story Straight" provides an important examination of the challenges historians of the past have faced while trying to chronicle the historiography of the Mormon religious tradition.

[52] Joseph F. Smith, "Introduction to History of the Prophet Joseph, by His Mother, Lucy Smith." *Improvement Era* 5, no. 1, (November 1901): 1-3.

[53] Joseph F. Smith, "Joseph Smith as a Boy." *Improvement Era* 9, no. 2 (December 1905): 109.

[54] Ibid, 109-10.

[55] Amy Hoyt and Sara Patterson, "Changing Gender Expectations in the Era of Transition from Polygamy to Monogamy, 1890-1920." *Gender & History* 23. 1 (April 2011): 73

[56] Gordon Shepherd and Gary Shepherd, *A Kingdom Transformed: Themes in the Development of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1984), 35. The Shepherd's work is, to my knowledge, the first to track categorize and track the shifting currents of the Church's rhetorical themes. Thirty years later, their work remains an excellent example of interdisciplinary scholarship.

[57] J. Golden Kimball, "Untitled." *Seventy-Fifth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.* (April, 6, 7, and 9, 1905). Accessed online June 30, 2014 from http://scriptures.byu.edu/gc-historical/1905-A.pdf.

[58] Anthon Lund, "Untitled." *Eighty-Ninth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. (June 1, 2, and 3, 1919). Accessed online June 30, 2014 from http://scriptures.byu.edu/gc-historical/1919-A.pdf.

[59] John Henry Smith, "Untitled." *Seventy-Sixth Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.* (October 6, 7, and 8, 1905). Access online June 30, 2014 from http://scriptures.byu.edu/gc-historical/1905-O.pdf.

[60] Charles W. Hart, "Untitled." *Eighty-Fourth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.* (April 4, 5, and 6, 1914). Accessed online June 30, 2014 from http://scriptures.byu.edu/gc-historical/1914-A.pdf.

[61] Charles W. Nibley, "Untitled." *Eighty-Ninth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. (June 1, 2, and 3, 1919). Accessed online June 30, 2014 from http://scriptures.byu.edu/gc-historical/1919-A.pdf.

[62] J. Golden Kimball, "Untitled." *Seventy-Fifth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.* (April 6, 7, and 9, 1905). Accessed online June 30, 2014 from http://scriptures.byu.edu/gc-historical/1905-A.pdf. Within his address, Kimball As an adult, Kimball applied the same tough-love approach to his own children. When the other children at school learned Kimball's son would "give up" instead of fighting, he became a frequent target for bullying and was believed to be a coward. Kimball instructed his son that he did not have to take the abuse. Not long thereafter, Kimball explained that his son "came home with his thumb out of joint, and, forgetting all about my religion, I said, Did you whip him? He said, yes. Then I gave him some fatherly counsel."(pg. 53)

[63] George C. Cannon, "Untitled." *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* 53, no. 28 (July 13, 1891), 436.

[64] Joseph F. Smith, "Untitled." *Seventy-Fourth Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.* (October 4, 5, and 6, 1903). Accessed online June 30, 2014 from http://scriptures.byu.edu/gc-historical/1903-O.pdf

[65] Marriner W. Merrill, "Untitled." *Seventy-Second Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.* (October 4, 5, and 6, 1901). Accessed online June 30, 2014 from http://scriptures.byu.edu/gc-historical/1901-O.pdf.

[66] George Teasdale, "Untitled." *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* 57, no. 1 (January 3, 1895), 6.

[67] The association of missionary work with violence was not unfounded in the Mormon experience, as nineteenth century missionaries were often threatened with violence. Occasionally, these verbal threats were acted upon. For example, in July 1879, Joseph Stranding, a 24-year-old missionary from Utah, was murder and mutilated in Georgia. In 1857, Parley P. Pratt was hunted down and murdered in modern-day Oklahoma. For more on Mormonism and violence, see Patrick Q. Mason, *The Mormon Menace: Violence and Anti-Mormonism in the Postbellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[68] George F. Richards, "Untitled." *Eightieth Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.* (October 3, 4, and 6, 1909). Accessed online June 30, 2014 from http://scriptures.byu.edu/gc-historical/1909-O.pdf.

[69] Francis M. Lyman, "Untitled." *Seventy-Fifth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.* (April, 6, 7, and 9, 1905). Accessed online June 30, 2014 from http://scriptures.byu.edu/gc-historical/1905-A.pdf.

[70] J. Golden Kimball, "Untitled." *Seventy-Fifth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.* (April, 6, 7, and 9, 1905). Accessed online June 30, 2014 from http://scriptures.byu.edu/gc-historical/1905-A.pdf.

CHAPTER 4

THE POLITICS OF PLACE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF MORMON IDENTITY, 1847- 1920

On July 24, 1847, Brigham Young, still weak and bed-ridden from the effects of an unnamed disease, crossed over the Big Mountain and, as a passenger in Wilford Woodruff's wagon, began making the descent into the Salt Lake Valley.[1] After 111 days on the trail, Young and his party of Mormon pioneers were hundreds of miles from their previous home in Nauvoo, Illinois, and well outside of the then-current geographical boundaries of the United States. As Woodruff carefully navigated his wagon through the rocky terrain of what is known today as Emigration Canyon, Young implored him to turn the wagon around so that the leader could "have a view of a portion of [the] Salt Lake Valley" from his prone position in the back of the wagon. Writing in his journal, Young recalled that as he looked out, "The spirit of light rested upon me and hovered over the valley, and I felt that there the Saints would find protection and safety."[2] Brigham Young found his home. If Young made a prophetic declaration at this moment of spiritual clarity about the land he and the Mormons would soon colonize, neither he nor anyone within the immediate party recorded it at that time or in the weeks and months that followed. Instead, Mormons came to envision, recall, and commemorate the events surrounding the settlement of Utah through a combination of folk beliefs, spun from the world of mythos and faith, and perhaps some rumor and hearsay.[3]

One of the most enduring claims was made by Wilford Woodruff, Young's close friend and a future president of the church, in a 1877 holiday speech delivered a few months after Young's death and some thirty years after their arrival in the valley. In his speech, Woodruff

recalled his and Young's arrival in the valley and provided context for Young's vision.[4] He recollected:

> When we came out of the cañon *[sic]* into full view of the valley, I turned the side of my carriage around, open to the west, and President Young arose from his bed and took a survey of the country. While gazing on the scene before us, he was enwrapped in vision for several minutes. He had seen the valley before in vision, and upon this occasion he saw the future glory of Zion and of Israel, as they would be, planted in the valleys of these mountains. When the vision had passed, he said: "It is enough. *This is the right place*. Drive on."[5]

It remains unclear whether Young actually said these words or said something along these lines. It seems plausible due to the limitations of memory and the timing of the speech only a few months after Young's death, that Woodruff engineered these words on behalf of Young, based upon his own memory and whatever needs for commemoration he might have felt at the time.[6] A secular American analogy is the way in which, during the years following George Washington's death, Parson Mason Locke Weems immortalized the father of the country by manufacturing events from his childhood, including the famed chopping down of the cherry tree. Weems thereby mythologized the man, his character, and his accomplishments, elevating him in the nation's popular memory to demigod status and providing Americans a necessary dose of myth they could relate to. So too would Woodruff's recollections help to elevate Young and his status as a religious leader, organizer, and colonizer into something akin to an "American Moses."[7] Regardless of the intent or picayune factual detail, Woodruff's quote gained traction and, to this day, as folklorist Richard C. Poulsen concluded, "the belief remains firmly ensconced in the consciousness of the folk."[8]

From generation to generation and neighbor to neighbor, from the mouths of authority figures from within the community, parents, teachers, and religious leaders, this folk belief was transmitted again and again, gradually crossing over in the minds of many from myth into reality, until Mormons taught the version of history they most *wanted* to believe, a process that

effectively manipulated the people's memory, blurred reality, and encouraged a form of historical amnesia. During this process, Brigham Young's declaration "This is the right place" would be shortened in the popular vernacular into "This is the place," a phrase today so engrained in Utahans that it serves as the namesake for a number of local businesses—a storage facility, a park, and even a tattoo and piercing shop—and serves as the title of the state song.[9]

Completing the complex but well-analyzed process of hero legend formation, the cycle of fact-myth-history was cemented into place on July 24, 1947. On that day, an estimated 50,000 spectators arrived at the mouth of Emigration Canyon to witness and celebrate the unveiling and dedication of a sixty-foot tall monument built by Mormons to honor the memory of the pioneers and to denote the *exact spot* of Young's proclamation.[10] Despite the high improbability of locating such a "spot," by erecting a monument and preserving a space as *the* place, Mormons memorialized their folkloric tradition and blended the physical and imagined worlds. In like fashion, any tourist who ever tossed a coin across a narrow stretch of the Delaware River might not have been actually replicating a George Washington feat. But they certainly were celebrating George Washington's legacy. In so doing, Mormons hoped the amalgamation of the real and the imagined, the myth and the place, would establish a specific interpretation of the past and the significance, real or imagined, of a place.

I begin this chapter with an overview of the contested folk beliefs about Utah's founding and settlement, not to instigate a pointless and unresolvable debate about authenticity or the lack thereof in Mormon history, but instead to illustrate a far larger and more culturally salient point. That point is this: notions of place maintain great significance and meaning—culturally, symbolically, geographically, and theologically—for members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints today, just as they have as in the past. From the very moment of the Church's establishment in 1830, "Place" has factored prominently into many of the Church's decisions. "Place" matters, not just in a general or generic way. It requires geographic specificity, even if

that specificity must be imposed latterly, after the events in question. This is because the Mormon community – like any other – needs to be able to see and visit the place; to replicate in their historical memory what happened 'there.' Any Christian who walks the Stations of the Cross; any Muslim pilgrim who makes the Hajj; any Jew who prays at the Western Wall; any Buddhist who circuits Tibet's Lake Yamdrok; proves the point in a religious fashion. Secularly, any Civil War buff who walks the battlefields of Gettysburg, or who marches across the bridge at Selma, is likewise recreating and reifying the process in a historical-cultural sense. Nitpicking – for example, pointing out that if every piece of wood is replaced, then a historic ship really isn't the ship it was (as the famous philosophical riddle holds) is beside the point. Living as we do in a world of fixed spots and references, having a place to attach to an event is a clear human need across cultures. Mormons were and remain unexceptional in this regard. As other American religions organized during the Second Great Awakening of the early 1800s, Mormons established faith by looking forward to Christ's impending return and ushering in of the Millennium. However, whereas other faiths like the Millerites or Seventh-Day Adventists prophesied the *time* of Christ's Second Coming, Joseph Smith and the Mormons emphasized the *place.*[11] During the settlement of Utah, so important was the idea that God led Brigham Young to *this* specific valley and that Young, recognizing the land from a vision, had declared "*This* is the place," or more emphatically, "This is the *right* place" that they built monuments to denote "this is the place" where Young uttered, "this is the place." And while this statement also supports what many Mormons had long maintained, that they were God's chosen people who were led, much like the biblical Israelites or America's Pilgrim Fathers, through a wilderness experience prior to entering their promised land, it also important as an example of how Mormons use place to understand their identity, to establish their claims as a religion, and to instigate change.[12]

During the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, a time in American history when the mythic ideal of the West became the basis for a new national consciousness, the attention of

the nation was directed westward moreso than ever before. A new-breed of artists and literati produced a stream of images and essays that were heavy consumed in the East, praising the wonders of the American Western landscape and the people who called such space home. Technological advances in transportation and the efforts of boosters instigated a new era of western tourism and spending. Indeed, these changes set up the 'Golden Age,' not so much of the historic west itself, but the memory of that west – a memory of the mythic as well as the historic. Not accidentally, this age of golden memorialization came soon after the actual "closing" of whatever historic west truly existed. So too, the sacralization of Mormon sites came after the actual settlement-to-statehood process of Utah was complete. Once complete, Mormons – and Utahans, and Americans – could get down to the business of memorialization. The increased attention brought new levels of scrutiny, and Mormons continued to struggle to overcome perceptions of their un-Americanness. During this time, Mormons, I contend, recognized the power embedded in the land to assist them in their transformation, in the negotiation of new religious and cultural identities, and in their efforts to reconcile their relationship with the United States. In their promotion and representations of the symbols, images, and landscapes of the Utah's topography, Mormons believed they could foster a greater level of national acceptance and transition into the American mainstream. I argue that they believed that if they could sell the nation the idea that Utah was home to American landscapes, then they could prove their value and Americanness to America.

The Land as Cultural Image

Since the Church's organization, Mormons have established a unique relationship with "their" land: enhancing, molding, modifying, transforming, and imprinting it with meaning in order that it reflects a cultural image of themselves and their beliefs.[13] These landscapes exist in other contexts, including "American" contexts. Thus the stage is set for a sort of double-consciousness when it comes to geographic/historical memory as Mormons see the land and its usages through their own religious narrative and experiences but also through the narrative of the nation and non-Mormon Utahans who see the land and its usages fulfilling other roles within their identity.[14] The Mormon image is primary, in the sense of coming first, at least for members of the LDS Church. Over time, this image itself has changed to fit the needs of the growing and adapting Church. During the Church's formative years, Mormons understood widespread ridicule and persecution as proof of Joseph Smith's claim that he had restored the correct doctrines of Christ's original church. Thus, seeing themselves as the latter-day Christian community, Mormons founded several new communities to establish their utopia and to parallel Biblical Israel's attempts to establish Zion. Through this lens, Mormons understood the land upon which they built their communities in Kirtland, Ohio, and Independence, Missouri, as sacred and consecrated for a religious purpose. Joseph Smith prophesied along these lines, drawing parallels between their efforts in community building and Christ's millennial return. He said, "Hearken, oh ye elders of my church, saith the Lord your God, who have assembled yourselves together, according to my commandments, in this land, which is the land of Missouri, which is the land I have appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the Saints."[15] Thus, through this process, Mormons imprinted onto the geographic land their beliefs, infusing the wilderness with theological and millennial significance: this is the land where God's people will gather prior to the Second Coming of Christ.

With each subsequent eviction, from Kirtland to Independence to Nauvoo, Mormon leadership began charting alternative locations for the establishment of Zion in places like Texas, Oregon, and California before deciding on the Rocky Mountains. As early as 1842, Joseph Smith stated that the Saints would finally find safety in the mountains: "I prophesied that the Saints would continue to suffer much affliction and would be driven to the Rocky Mountains."[16] With such a directive, Mormons began imposing theological significance and their cultural image upon the mountains. At first, the Mormons turned to the Bible and read themselves into the prophecies. Especially meaningful were sections of Isaiah that prophesied of the last days. In Isaiah 2:2, for example, the Saints read, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." Ernest Hemingway, explaining the rise of mythic Paris as the site of the Lost Generation's "Movable Feast," would have understood the concept of a "movable Zion." Wherever the Lost Generation went and wrote, lived and loved; wherever their fans, including Woody Allen, went to pay them homage – that is where the Lost Generation is supposed to have made its Paris magical. Likewise, wherever the Mormons pioneered, struggled, worshipped and persevered, that is where they found, and made, their Zion(s).

As the Saints trekked westward, their understanding of land and the accompanying sense of place did not remain static throughout the remainder of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but were prone to fluctuation. As I detail within this chapter, during the early years (1847-1869) of settling the Salt Lake Valley, Mormons continued to package and use land for themselves, to assist in community building and in developing a sense of unity. Over time (1890-1920), as Mormons sought integration, they began more actively to package their sense of place for outsiders. Just as the Saints made major concessions to align economically, politically, socially, and culturally with the standards set by the United States in the decades before and after being awarded statehood in 1896, so too would the Saints' views of and uses of Utah's land

evolve as a mechanism for constructing their identity and negotiating their relationship with national expectations.

With each of these periods in Mormon history, Mormons used the land in question for different reasons: to develop, maintain, and/or promote various aspects of their religion for consumption by other Mormons or by the public. These views represent various *senses* of place, by which I mean, using folklorist Kent Ryden's definition, "that complex of meaning that gives a landscape significance in the eyes of the people who inhabit it, marking it off from the surrounding terra incognita." [17] Since the 1970s, a coalition of scholars, representing various academic disciplines and specialties, including geographers, folklorists, and cultural and architectural historians, have rallied together in an attempt to better understand the process by which "space" becomes a "place." These scholars, known as humanistic geographers, recognized that a strictly scientific and spatial approach to mapping the geographic distribution of land—such as is common in modern cartography—was flawed as it fails to reveal the manmade cultural characteristics of a location or a landscape. While the spatial distribution and contours of physical landforms are outlined and the relationship of one landform to another is measured and mapped, what often remained ignored were, as geographer James R. Shortridge wrote, "the important intangibles of place: meaning, essence, and character."[18] These humanistic geographers, like the cultural geographers of a generation earlier who emphasized the significance of and drew meaning from vernacular cultural constructions that were superimposed upon the physical landscape, tried to "get into the mind" of the subjects in order to understand the cultural meaning of the physical world their subjects inhabited.[19] In this way, humanistic geographers were lending their analytical voices to an ongoing intellectual conversation that even included contributions from such noted scholars as Sir. James George Frazer and James Campbell, men who both found significance in the so-called "intangibles of place" within the worlds of ancient mythology and

religion.[20] While neither Frazer nor Campbell's work is of recent construction, their work demonstrates that questions about the meaning of place are age-old and left to each generation to work out.

In making this distinction, humanistic and cultural geographers were able to distinguish between the "theoretical term *space"* and the more "emotion-laden and particularistic term *place*."[21] Space, therefore, is largely two-dimensional, abstract, and geometrical. Space is like a *tabula rasa* upon which geographic forms, void of any real meaning outside of its physical qualities, can be spatial outlined and understood. Space, as geographer Edward Relph writes, is "an object for reflection," and not, as Ryden wrote, "a subject to be experienced."[22]

Place, on the other hand, suggests meaning, particularly, as geographer Yi Fu Tuan described, "meaning constructed by experience," sometimes it is man-made but is often naturally occurring.[23] A sense of place develops gradually as people or a person endow space with value and meaning. In our dealings with our physical surroundings, we use our senses—sight, smell, taste, hear, and touch—to experience space and to develop connections with it. Place connotes distinction, recognition, and familiarity. It is also a feeling or a perception that is shared by people. One definition of place, proposed by Tuan, is that a place comes into existence when humans give meaning to a part of the larger, undifferentiated space. Any time a location is identified or given a name, space takes on a third dimension, it acquires depth, and as such, becomes a place.

Tuan wrote that a sense of place "is made up of experiences, mostly fleeting and undramatic, repeated day after day and over the span of years. It is a unique blend of sights, sounds, and smells, a unique harmony of natural and artificial rhythms such as times of sunrise and sunset, of work and play. The feel of a place is registered in one's muscles and bones."[24] Naturally, the experiences through which a person or a people develop a sense of place does not

occur over night, but over weeks, months, and years. Ryden describes this process as occurring "gradually and unconsciously" as a person or a people "becom[e] familiar with [the landscape's] physical properties, accruing a history within its confines." While Ryden and Tuan's descriptions are accurate, I also recognize limitations in their characterization of this idea, especially as is evident in the way Mormons used the land.

Crucially, Ryden and Tuan's descriptions ignore the role of human agency in developing and shaping a sense of place.[25] As I will explore in this chapter, the existence of multiple, inconsistent, and contradictory *senses* of place allows for the possibility of intentional change, for one person or group to bend or alter their sense of place to achieve their own purposes. Just as one's sense of place was shaped by experience, so too could it be shaped by expected experiences. In addition to the passive, "gradual" and "unconscious" development of a sense of place as described by Ryden, I contend that some Mormons were also *active* agents in the construction of a variety of senses of place. Recognizing that the history, memory, associations, and attachment that influenced the Mormon relationship and understanding of a place was simultaneously consumable and consumed by outsiders, Mormons could bend their sense of place to meet the demands or expectations of the public.

The Land as Persecutor

Ever since Mormon pioneers arrived in the Great Salt Lake Valley in July 1847, their understanding, use, and views of land and place have evolved to reflect their shifting identity especially as they negotiated their relationship with the cultural, social, and political landscape of the United States. Within the first few years of settlement, Mormon perspectives on land and place were most often used to help establish and reinforce a communal identity centered upon their experience with violence and persecution.[26] Geographically isolated from those who would wish them harm, Mormons in the Utah territory did not need to contend with mobs and vigilantes as they had in the past. These threats of persecution, both real and imagined, were a driving force in the creation of a distinctive Mormon identity during the Church's formative years, mirroring the martyr's image cast by Joseph Smith. During Smith's lifetime, he often described himself as "persecuted the worst of any man on the earth."[27] Religion historian R. Laurence Moore even called the suffering of persecution among early Mormons a "badge of membership in the church."[28] Even without the threat of persecution in Utah, the *rhetoric* of persecution would continue to be used to shape Mormon communal identity as they substituted the persecution they suffered at the hands of man for the persecution they perceived suffering at the hands of Mother Nature and the land. This rhetoric of persecution is common to the origin accounts of many different faiths from all corners of the earth. Zoroastrians, for example, recount the lonesome wandering and harassment experienced by Zoroaster, before he found followers, patronage, and protection in a place of pastoral plenty. The wandering of the ancient Israelites through Sinai is the most obvious western version, while the persecution of early Christians in Rome offers other similarities.

According to the written accounts of many early pioneers, the land, vegetation, and environment of the Mormon's new home in Utah was surprisingly tame. When the vanguard of

the first Mormon pioneer party initially entered the Salt Lake valley on July 21, 1847, they reported "we could not refrain from a shout of joy which almost involuntarily escaped from our lips the moment this *grand* and *lovely* scenery [emphasis added] was within our view."[29] Wilford Woodruff, who, as aforementioned, would arrive with Brigham Young a few days later on July 24, was even more upbeat:

> We gazed with wonder and admiration upon the most fertile valley spread out before us . . . clothed with a heavy garment of vegetation and in the midst of which glistened the waters of the Great Salt Lake, with mountains all around towering to the skies, and streams, rivulets, and creeks of pure water running through the beautiful valley.[30]

Woodruff's account of a "fertile" and "beautiful valley" continues by summarizing the region as "present[ing] at one view to us the grandest scenery and prospect that we could have obtained *on earth* [emphasis added]." Prior to his martyrdom, Joseph Smith failed to mention the scenery of the land he foresaw the Saints inhabiting, instead describing the Rocky Mountain West as a site of refuge for the persecution-weary people, "a spot upon the footstools of God, where law is respected; where the Constitution for which our fathers bled is revered; where the people who dwell here can enjoy liberty, and worship God in three or in twenty different ways, and no man can be permitted to plague his head about it."[31]

From their written records, we learn that other members of the original and subsequent pioneer parties also held remarkably favorable and optimistic initial impressions of the land. As geographer Richard Jackson has noted in his research of the early Mormon Church, many of these pioneers left detailed accounts that provide vivid and overwhelmingly positive descriptions of the landscape that awaited the Mormons upon arrival. Early pioneers described the soil to be of "most excellent quality," covered with a variety of "very luxuriant" green grasses. The streams reportedly were plentiful, providing fresh mountain "water excellent" "about every one or two miles." Others described the ground vegetation that covered the ground as a "wheat grass" that grew in places "10 or 12 feet high." So thick and high was the vegetation that, upon arriving, the

pioneers had to "wad[e] through thick grass for some distance," before finding a "place bare enough for a camping ground, the grass being only knee deep but very thick."[32] Pioneer Harriet Young declared, "We have traveled fifteen hundred miles to get here, and I would willingly travel a thousand miles farther."[33] Perhaps the outlook of the early Mormon pioneers upon first arriving in the Salt Lake valley can be best summarized in the favorable view of William Clayton, who, while "happily disappointed" because of little timber, wrote, "I could not help shouting 'hooray, hooray, here's my home at last!'"[34]

Something remarkable yet inevitable occurred though within the next few years. Mormon authority figures began reworking the pioneer narrative, transforming the favorable and optimistic views of the land into one that was markedly tragic and melancholy. Speeches describing the first pioneer's journey and arrival in the valley were made publically, often at events commemorating and memorializing pioneers, their experiences, accomplishments, and contributions in the conquering and settling of the West. At one such commemoration held just *three* years after the arrival of the first pioneers, apostle Willard Richards described the pioneers' journey:

> [The pioneers] not knowing whither they were going; journeyed westward in a most inclement year and season, buffeting snows, hail, sleet, wind like a tornado, sometimes not a tent left standing in camp over night; women and children on the naked earth open to the sky; creeks and rivers impassable, sun, moon, and stars not seen for eleven days at a time; not a spear of grass on the prairie, or bud on the tress; scores of families without a morsel of bread, teams dying with hunger. . .

He continued with a critical delineation of the valley, describing it not as "fertile" or "beautiful" as had Richards' fellow-apostle and historical eyewitness Wilford Woodruff, but instead as "covered with black crickets" and "Indians naked and loathsome," willfully ignoring the written record and the memories of eyewitnesses then still living.[35] Again, coming just three years after the earliest Saints arrival, Richards remarks demonstrate just how rapidly this reworking of the settlement narrative occurred. In the multivolume *History of Utah*, Orson

Whitney described the 1847 panorama that greeted the pioneer as "a broad and barren plain, hemmed in by mountains, blistering in the rays of the midsummer sun. No waving fields, no swaying forests, no verdant meadows to rest and refresh the weary eye, but on all sides a seemingly interminable waste of sagebrush bespangled with sunflowers,--the paradise of the lizard, the cricket and the rattlesnake."[36] In 1852, five years after the pioneers' arrival, the reimagining of the land continued when Church Historian George A. Smith declared the first Saints discovered "a desert, containing nothing but a few bunches of dead grass and crickets enough to fence the land."[37] A few years later, another apostle, Heber C. Kimball, went as far as to describe the valley as "a desolate region."[38]

Soon, the land would be within the Mormon storytelling tradition transformed from a "promised" land into an inhabitable and forsaken desert. The valley of tall, lush grasses, fertile soil, and fresh water that pioneers first reported were replaced with descriptions that were tragic and pathetic. One apostle described the valley as consisting of "a few isolated bushes . . . the soil, . . . dry and baked; . . . a land that had the appearance of being parched desert. . . . and soil that to all human appearance was unproductive."[39] One popular yet disproven folktale commonly shared among the Saints was that of a lone cedar tree standing throughout the entire valley, a tale whose popularity stems from its emphasis of the harshness of the land.[40] Speaking at the Pioneer Day celebrations of 1877, another apostle went as far as to liken the Salt Lake valley to the "desert of Sahara."[41] The journey, which had once been described by immigrant Mary Farmer in a letter to her parents as "the source of much enjoyment and pleasure" became, as apostle George Albert Smith described in 1861, a "*toilsome* journey . . . over a desert for upwards of 1000 miles involving difficulties such as are *unparalleled in the history of mankind*."[42]

Through this refashioning of the settlement narrative, Mormons' views of the land reflected their continued need to recultivate the perception of persecution. Brigham Young

reportedly told missionaries leaving Utah that they were not to suggest "the beauty of their mountain home, but to dwell on the idea of persecution, and to call the poor into a persecuted church."[43] Such actions are in line with the research of Luther Gerlach and Virgina Hine, who, in their study of several twentieth-century religious movements, concluded that non-traditional religious movements often perceived more opposition to their cause than seems to exist objectively.[44] Certainly, Mormons could have painted local Native American as villains; however, Mormon doctrine held Native Americans were descendants of the peoples of the *Book of Mormon,* who would, in the last days, come to accept Mormonism. Rather than acting out with hostility, Brigham Young encouraged his people to treat the local Paiutes and Shoshones with civility and kindness. In this regard, Young was somewhat akin to William Penn. Like the Quakers, the record of Mormons regarding Native Americans was relatively benign, aside from a few skirmishes and misunderstandings.[45] Of course, the settlement process was ongoing and involved multiple actors. Hence, the attempt at a placid arrangement soon carried past the ability of locals to control.

Perhaps seeing no other viable option and understanding the role of suffering, both real and imagined, as a bonding agent, unifying the sufferers, Mormons turned to the land, casting it in the role of villain, and using language to describe it in such terms as to propagate the persecution narrative. Without hostile opposition from their immediate neighbors, Mormons had to engineer opposition from other sources to especially as their numbers swelled between 1847 and 1869, as over 70,000 Mormon converts made the overland journey to join with the Saints in the West. [46] While the immigrants' conversions, travels, and settlements in Utah were challenging, most had only heard of the persecutions that marred Mormon memories of Nauvoo, Illinois and Jackson Country, Missouri and lacked the first-hand experience to establish a shared communal identity with the other Saints.

Vilifying the land and describing it as inhospitable and barren also, conveniently, helped paved the way for the idea, as some Mormons would claim, that they were forced to settle territory no one else wanted. Such rhetoric allowed Mormons to again exaggerate their suffering and attribute it to the notion that God's chosen people have always suffered adversity. In an 1855 address, for example, Brigham Young explained the land that awaiting him upon arrival as having:

> nothing, either in soil, climate, or productions, to attract the notice of even the adventurous and enterprising; in a country which offered no inducements worthy of consideration to any people but us. And why to us as a people? Because here, far distant from any white settlements, upon a piece of earth not valuable for its facilities either for cultivation, navigation, or commerce, where the whole face of the country presented the most barren and forbidding aspect, we considered we might live and enjoy our religion unmolested, and be free from the meddlesome interference of any person. If our principles and religion were obnoxious to any, they were relived from our presence, unless they chose to follow us.[47]

In other words, this region's lack of value and promise—the very characteristics that made the land undesirable to all other peoples—made this region ideal for Mormon refuge. While descriptions like this which portrayed the Rocky Mountain region as a desert, barren, desolate, and inhospitable, were widely available in the United States, especially in the East, that they were being perpetuated despite widespread knowledge, among the Church, of their inaccuracy, suggest Mormon leaders where attempting to accomplish much more than a simple description of the land.[48]

The Land as Promised

Descriptions of the land as desolate and barren would also play a significant role in the Mormon views on land and place in the mid-nineteenth century, especially as the Saints experienced success in their cooperative venture to cultivate the land.[49] As previously documented in Chapter 1, the persistent march of America's westward expansion put Mormons-in-Utah and the United States on a collision course. Mormons had found their promised land. Yet the United States was in the midst of Manifest Destiny, and not likely to leave out any place between the Atlantic and Pacific simply because a unique band of American religionists considered it theirs. In the 1860s, the newly established Republican Party began taking increasingly punitive steps to eliminate the practice of polygamy among the Mormons. The issue of polygamy became the touchstone for the conflicting territorial and cultural interests, and as such would dominate the Mormons and United States relations for the remainder of the century.

As this potentially antagonistic relationship with the United States evolved, so too did Mormon views of land and place shift. In previous decades Mormons largely viewed the land as a desolate desert, the necessary foil for Mormon construction of communal identity. But as new forms of persecution reemerged in the 1860s and 70s, the necessity of a land-as-villain motif diminished and Mormons would again recast the land, transforming it through their rhetoric, representations, and memory from a "barren" and "inhospitable" place into a Promised Land, a Holy Land, and a New Zion. By describing their land through language that implied divine intervention, Mormons tapped into and advanced the Puritans' Errand into the Wilderness metaphor, as well as the ancient Israelites' Land of Canaan, flowing with milk and honey metaphor.[50] Many Puritans had interpreted similarities between their forced migration from Europe, across the Atlantic, and into the New World and with the biblical account of the Israelites' passage through the Red Sea and into a new land. Like the Israelites, Puritans

described their new home as a potential "land of milk and honey." They even looked for geographical similarities between the Old and New Worlds and established place-names in the New World with biblical origins.[51] Just as the Puritans patterned their experiences after the Israelites' Exodus, Mormons would follow suit, fleeing persecution, establishing a home for religious freedoms, and building up a "City on the Hill" to be an ensign to the world. As the federal government increasingly labeled their religious beliefs and practices "barbaric," Mormons used the landscape of the Great Basin, as one historian described it, as "the perfect surrogate" in which to negotiate the tensions surrounding the narrative of this drama. If initial settlers looked out on a dark and foreboding wilderness, their children and grandchildren celebrated their ancestors' arrival in a promised land.

An influential approach employed by Mormons to recast Utah as a Promised Land was the interpretation of their experiences through a biblical and often millennial lens, whereby reading the past into the present. If the United States were determined to marginalize Mormon beliefs and practices, the Mormons would belligerently maintain their sense of apartness and read their trials as necessary challenges they were required to endure prior to the Second Coming of Christ. Mormon leaders began adopting Old Testament symbolism for their identity and their landscape, likening biblical accounts to their own experiences, describing these experiences as the fulfillment of ancient prophecy, and, as sociologist Armand Mauss notes, using Jews "as a kind of theological alter ego."[52] Mormons began referring to themselves as Israel and their land as Zion. Their leaders were referred to as prophets and patriarchs. Non-Mormons were referred to as gentiles; their land, Babylon.[53]

Prior to his death in 1844, Joseph Smith was prone to pull the past into the present and the present into the past. As historian Phil Barlow cleverly and accurately notes, "Joseph Smith pre-empted Steven Spielberg by going 'back to the future' and then pulling it into the present."[54]

If, as occurred on occasion, Smith stumbled across a bucolic American landscape, he interpreted it as the ancient site of the Garden of Eden, a pile of rocks became an ancient "altar built by Adam to offer sacrifice to God," or a human skeleton became the remains of an ancient Book of Mormon warrior.[55] Smith would also draw parallels between his life and ancient biblical prophets. On one occasion, he described himself like the Apostle Paul: "I, like Paul, have been in perils, and . . . should be like a fish out of water if I were out of persecutors."[56] Elsewhere, Brigham Young frequently likened himself unto Moses and, through his use of specific biblical accounts (like Genesis 12), sought to make these similarities apparent to his audience: "Go forth from your native land, and your father's house, to the land that I will show you."[57]

In settling the land, Mormons often read their experiences and their physical surroundings through an ancient Old Testament lens, believing some scriptures referenced their settlement in Utah. Orson Pratt claimed that the words of Isaiah—"O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain" (40:9)—prophesied the Saints' relocation to Utah. Another popular scripture that appears repeatedly in Mormon sermons also comes from the prophet Isaiah (35:1), wherein he describes a wilderness blossoming as a rose. As the Saints began having success cultivating the land, this prophesy began to be interpreted literally and not metaphorically as it had in the past. An analogous sentiment is found in the Mormon scripture *Doctrine and Covenants*, giving Saints an updated version of this prophesied land transformation: "And the Lord, even the Savior, shall stand in the midst of his people, and shall reign over all flesh. . . . And in the barren deserts there shall come forth pools of living water; and the parched grounds shall no longer be a thirsty land."[58] Seeing their shadow in the light cast by these scriptures, Mormons recognized evidence of their chosen-ness everywhere.

From the 1850s through the 1870s, Mormon apostles delivered many speeches in which they emphasized that this ancient prophecy—the desert blossoming as a rose—was in the process

of being fulfilled, again a connection that implied in the minds of the audience that Mormons were God's chosen people called to inhabit a chosen land as part of a divine design. For instance, in a prayer offered in April, 1853, minutes after the cornerstone of the Salt Lake City Temple had been laid, apostle Orson Hyde offered gratitude for God's "manifold blessings and mercies," especially "since we have been compelled to flee to the valleys and caves of the mountains and hide ourselves in thy secret chambers, from the face of the serpent or dragon of persecution, red with the blood of the Saints and martyrs of Jesus, thou has caused the land to be fruitful—the wilderness and desert to rejoice and *blossom as the rose.*"[59]

Abundant topographic, geographic, and hydrologic similarities between Utah and Palestine also enabled Mormons to reimagine their new home as a modern Promised Land, even using place-names to connect the two places. Mormons were not strangers to the Old World. In 1840-41, apostle Orson Hyde traveled to Jerusalem and, upon returning, provided vivid descriptions of the Holy Land. Among the waterways, mountains, and towns of Utah include many whose names are drawn from the bible such as Canaan, Eden, Ephraim, Moab, and Nebo. When author and artist Alfred Loubourne sequestered himself upon a small island in in the Great Salt Lake, he compared his vineyard to that of biblical Naboth and his natural surroundings to the Garden of Gethsemane, Calvary, the Star of Bethlehem, and the Nativity.[60] The topographical and topical similarities between these two areas are numerous and well-documented.[61] The most obvious similarity is the existence of a large, inland, salty body of water: the Great Salt Lake and the Dead Sea. The region's religious capitals, Salt Lake City and Jerusalem, are both nestled along the shores of their respective salty seas. Furthermore, both of these salt lakes are fed by a fresh water river originating from a smaller lake: the Utah Lake and the Sea of Galilee, the connecting rivers share the same name: Jordan. In addition to this river's importance as a source of life, the Jordan River also served a spiritual purpose as a site for spiritual renewal.[62] Like the

Jordan River of Israel that has served as a site for Christian baptism since the time of Christ, Utah's river served a similar religious purpose for Mormons. As is evident by an 1896 advertisement in the Rio Grande Western Railway's promotional brochure *Pointer to Prosperity*, the hydrologic and geographic similarities between Utah and Israel were well-known and used to encourage tourism.[63]

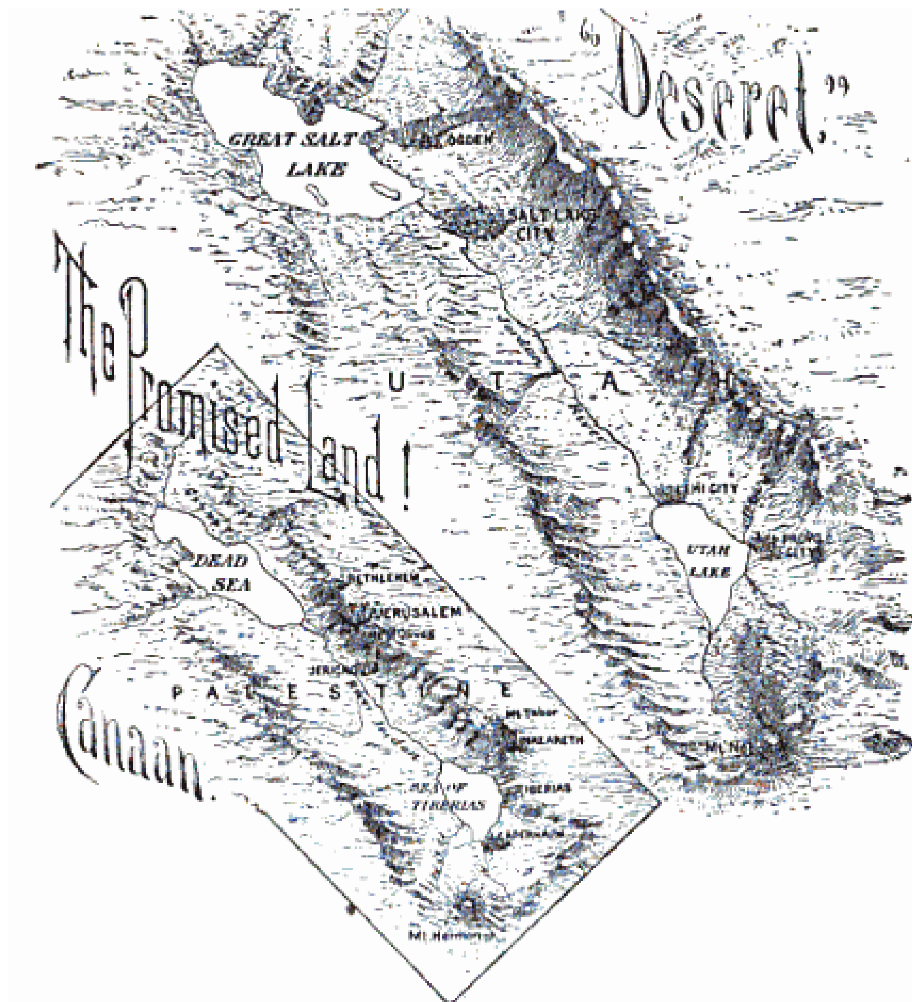

Figure 4-1. "The Promised Land": In this 1896 map published by the Rio Grande Western Railway, the physical landscape of Utah and the Holy Land are compared.

The Land as American

When Leland Stanford, President of the Central Pacific Railroad Company, tapped a silver hammer on an iron spike at Promontory Summit, Utah, on May 10, 1869, he triggered the transmission of a telegraph message that was received with parades, speeches, applause and cannon fire at sites across the nation. Stanford's message marked the completion of the transcontinental railroad and generated a new wave of interest in the American West, as tourists streamed westward in response to a series of effective nationwide campaigns extolling the majesty of the western landscape. These advertising campaigns endorsed the virtues of the American West, signifying that in it Americans would find not only the characteristics of Europe's most popular tourist destinations, but also uniquely American attractions.[64] It is worth noting that no American discourse of the time considered the railroads to have linked in a place that was Mormon, hence non-American. The Americanness of the land was taken as a matter of course by the mainstream.

These advertisements drew from a well-established tradition of monumentalizing nature. During the early nineteenth century, America sought to reconcile its self-regard with its actually modest level of world power. This conflict was never more succinctly summed up than when Secretary of State John Quincy Adams insisted that President James Monroe issue his famous doctrine solo, rather than in partnership with London, lest the United States be seen "as a cockboat in the wake of a British man-of-war." What Adams and Monroe understood was that, in 1823, the United States was a coming power, while Britain and France had already arrived as world empires. It would take the rest of the century – and the conquest of a continent – for the United States to reach a global position commensurate with its self-regard. But the point is that that self-regard was present long before the United States reached great power status. In similar vein, America's repeated attempts to establish a unique and influential national culture,

uninfluenced by their European counterparts, was fitful at best. Despite the best intentions and arguments of such luminaries as Thomas Jefferson and Ralph Waldo Emerson, the United States would never entirely sever itself from its transatlantic roots. During the early nineteenth century, the very building blocks of national culture—history, traditions, and artistic and literary accomplishments—had not sufficient time to develop and palled when compared to the rich and storied cultures of Europe. As a result, many viewed America through the nineteenth century as a second-rate nation. It was the landscape which gave American pretentions to uniqueness a major boost. As the tenets of Romanticism and Transcendentalism percolated in American society during the 1830s and 40s, some Americans recognized in America's untamed wilderness and landscapes something uniquely America: evidence of America's future greatness. Suddenly, Americans looked to their picturesque landscapes as compensation for their lack of a history, traditions, or cultural accomplishments. Americans flocked to scenic sites in the East such as Virginia's Natural Bridge, the White Mountains of New Hampshire, and New York's Niagara Falls were celebrated as natural wonders—American's substitute for Europe's castles, cathedrals, and ruins. As impressive as these eastern sites were, how much more so were the wonders of the west? To this list, railroad executives sought to now add western natural wonders, like Yellowstone, Yosemite, the Grand Canyon, and, in Utah, sites like the Great Salt Lake, Zion's, and Bryce Canyon.[65] Artists like Albert Bierstadt and Frederick Remington did a great deal to popularize the notion of a western wonderland in the realm of high culture, as did popular novelist Owen Wister and a host of others. It worked in ways relevant to the Mormon situation in Utah.

Following the completion of the transcontinental railroad, tourists traveled westward in record numbers. The Mormon-owned *Deseret News* reported estimates of ten thousand visitors during that first summer.[66] By the end of the 1870s, 100,000 people travelled to Utah along the Union and Central Pacific lines every year.[67] Those numbers would continue to rise so that by the

end of the century between 150,000 and 200,000 tourists travelled to Utah every year—marking Salt Lake City as one of the most popular tourist attractions in the American West. With a population of only 45,000 people, each year Salt Lake City welcomed in approximately four tourists for every resident.[68] In his book *Sacred Place*, John Sears describes the fervor of nineteenth-century tourism as being fueled by a type of "religious" passion. Tourists ascribed to American attractions the same language and emotion as had medieval pilgrims to holy religious sites centuries earlier. Tourists referred to themselves as "pilgrims" and described their visits to American landscapes as providing a "spiritual renewal." Tourist attractions, as Sears writes, "assumed some of the functions of sacred places in traditional societies." While scoffing at Mormon religious beliefs and practices, many tourists to Utah sought out Mormon holy sites to explore. Sears maintains that in a society consisting of a variety of religious sects and denominations, as did America in the nineteenth-century, these Mormon holy sites still held significance for non-believing outsiders, if not for their religious importance, then at least to affirm their sense of America as a "Promised Land."[69]

Easterners' perception of Mormons as mysterious proved a powerful lure. Utah's communities hardly needed to buy up advertising space in eastern newspapers as popular representations of Mormon's exotic religious beliefs and practices frequently appeared within newspaper pages, capturing the curiosity and tourism-dollars of would-be travelers. Tourists arriving in Salt Lake City were often met by local non-Mormons, referred to by the Mormons as "Gentiles," (and some Mormons) who perpetuated popular Mormon stereotypes for entertainment purposes, thereby strengthening notions of Mormon otherness. These performers, largely influenced by economic incentives, transformed themselves (as would Native Americans, African Americans, and many other "tourist workers" in the coming decades), as Hal Rothman described, "into people who look like themselves but who act and believe differently as they learn to market their place and its, and their, identity."[70] Furthermore, these duplicitous performances drove a

wedge into an already contentious relationship between Utah's Mormon and non-Mormon communities as these actions confirmed what Mormons had long believed: Utah's non-Mormon population was willing to do anything to gain an advantage in the state, including adjusting their behaviors to conform to tourists' preconceptions and the promise of financial reward.[71]

While tourists brought a welcomed boost to the local economy, their insistence on witnessing "deviant" Mormons in their natural habitat resulted in many uncomfortable situations, especially as their curiosity overpowered Victorian Era manners in their search for authenticity.[72] In their studies of tourism, sociologist Dean MacCannell and historian Hal Rothman noted the tourists' drive to experience first-hand the authentic, experiences had not in popular tourist's attractions but on back roads and in out-of-the-way restaurants or inns—believing these types of over-looked locations promise "a self-affirming authentic experience" wherein tourists can engage in "real" interactions with locals, untainted or uninfluenced by scripted industrial tourism.[73] Utah's first tourists had similar desires. They were, as historian Thomas K. Hafen described, "encouraged" by local non-Mormons to seek out "authentic" Mormon experiences in the "back regions of Mormonism," understood to be those areas off-limits to the general public: the temple, the Endowment House, and especially Mormon homes. To experience authentic Mormonism, tourists trickled into the rear pews of the Mormon Tabernacle in order to witness a religious meeting; others trespassed at the construction site of the Salt Lake Temple. Already, at this early stage, Mormonism was becoming something to observe and even enjoy, rather than to spurn, fear, or persecute. From objects of loathing to subjects of interest –even admiration -- went the pattern of mainstream discovery. Many tourists went right to the source and knocked on the front door of Brigham Young and other church leader's homes, hoping to gain a behind-the-scenes or between-the-shades look into "real" Mormon family life, especially the day-to-day dealings of polygamy.[74] In these regions deemed off-limits, tourists believed they would witness

"real" Mormonism and not, as they were led to believe, the elaborate show put on by the Mormons in public. It was this sentiment that Mark Twain captured with ironic wit when he wrote of his experience as a tourist in Salt Lake City in his travelogue *Roughing It*. According to his section on the Mormons, Twain admitted to "surreptitiously staring at every creature we took to be a Mormon. This was a fairyland to us, to all intents and purposes—a land of enchantment, and goblins and awful mystery. We felt a curiosity to ask every child how many mothers it had, and if it could tell them apart; and we experienced a thrill every time a dwelling-house door opened and shut as we passed, disclosing a glimpse of human heads and backs and shoulders—for we so longed to have a good satisfying look at a Mormon family in all its comprehensive ampleness, disposed in the customary concentric rings of its home circle."[75]

In reality, Mormon officials were unprepared for the swarms of tourists who suddenly descended upon Salt Lake City with their interest in learning about or, at least, observing Mormonism. Upon founding the territory, Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders believed the Great Basin would function as a physical barrier to keep other Americans at arm's length while Mormons, left undisturbed, would establish their utopian communities within.[76] In a speech delivered in 1860, as tensions between North and South escalated prior to the start of the Civil War, Brigham Young declared his isolationist views for Utah: "If the enemies of truth will let us alone, as barbarous as we are, we will soon show you the most peaceable, right-loving, and law-abiding community in the wide world."[77] It must have been surprisingly then for Young, considering his sentiment, when, shortly after the cornerstone-laying ceremonies for the Salt Temple, tourists began visiting the site after having taken an interest in the Mormon building. As Utah historians M. Guy Bishop and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel noted, over the lengthy forty year construction process, tourism to the temple—the most sacred of Mormon sites—would gradually increase until, as the building neared completion, "an avalanche of visitors ascended 'to the top of

the main tower, which commands a splendid view of the valley and the lake.'" As some visitors sought to "chip off pieces" of the temple as keepsakes or wanted to "scratch their names on the edifice," Mormons officials attempted to corral the crowds by issuing special tickets to visitors and leading supervised tours.[78]

Mormons leaders gradually warmed to the Salt Lake tourists, eventually coming to the decision that with the right approach they could sway public opinion in their favor and might even contribute to the *shaping* of the public's perception. Some senior church leaders like Brigham Young Jr. and Francis M. Lyman would continue to express their displeasure at any attempt to accommodate Salt Lake tourists. Lyman even asserted that anyone caught showing tourists the tabernacle should be reported to their priesthood leaders for disciplinary action.[79] However, by 1900, the views of most church leaders towards tourism had at least begun to soften and some even believed, as Thomas Hafen writes, "that they could convince Salt Lake tourists of Mormon virtue even if the tourists had come to see Mormon vice."[80] Instead of attempting to proselytize to tourists, addressing common misperceptions, or outlining the Church's doctrines, approaches the Church would eventually take in the twentieth century, the Saints first worked to ensure their city looked the part. The streets were kept clean; gardens and trees were carefully manicured. The grounds immediately surrounding the tabernacle, Endowment House, and Salt Lake Temple were kept immaculate. And travelers to the city noticed. Expecting to find the city sordid and reprehensible, home to the vilest of peoples, many travelers instead noted in letters, essays, and travel book's the city's beauty and progressiveness.[81] Captain Howard Stansbury of the Crops of Topographical Engineers, the man tasked with exploring and mapping the Salt Lake region by the United States War Department, wrote of his impressions of Salt Lake City in 1850. He described the city as giving an "appearance of prosperity, peaceful harmony, and cheerful contentment that pervaded the whole community."[82] A few years later in September 1855, French

naturalist Jules Rémy arrived in Salt Lake City for a month long visit. In his account of his travels, he wrote how he was "struck with the cleanliness which everywhere prevailed, and the comfort exhibited in the external appearance and good preservation of their dwellings."[83] William Hepworth Dixon, editor of *The Athenaeum* in London, remarked of the city in 1866:

> No beggar is seen in the streets; scarcely ever a tipsy man; and the drunken fellow, when you see one, is always either a minor [sic] or a soldier—of course a Gentile. No one seems poor. The people are quiet and civil, far more so than is usual in these western parts. From the presence of trees, of water, and of cattle, the streets have a pastoral character, seen in no other city of mountains and the plains.[84]

Second, the Saints put themselves out on public display by living the principles they taught and stressing class, refinement, and dignity. Brigham Young even reconsidered his isolationist principles and warmed to the tourists, going as far as seeking out opportunities to speak with visitors or, as was often the case, opening his front door to welcome prying visitors to his home. Before his death, he welcomed to the city many notable business and political including Mark Twain, P. T. Barnum, U. S. Grant, Horace Greeley, General William Sherman, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Even as he reached the end of his life, Young continued to welcome visitors into his home, believing these opportunities were "too valuable a means of correcting false ideas and removing prejudice to be discontinued."[85]

Because of the predominance of sensational and negative press, tourists arrived in Utah wanting to see the Mormons: they were the chief attraction. With a modern egalitarian ethic, there is discomfort with the prospect of putting other human beings and their culture on display. It is, at best, an exotic experience. However, it was also extremely common all during the nineteenth century, and clearly played a role in paving the way for eventual mainstreaming. But as the promise of statehood grew imminent in the early 1890s and then in the decade immediately following Utah's admission into the United States as the forty-fifth state, Mormons attempted to deflect some of this direct attention off of themselves and onto other attractions such as the

Mormon Tabernacle Choir or the Great Salt Lake.[86] In doing so, Mormons embraced a more visible and active role in promoting Utah as a tourist destination, and they found a vehicle for shaping tourist's views of Mormons and Mormonism. Some of the major changes came down through official channels, reflecting the evolving and modernizing views of the church leadership. As explored in his book about the church in the early-twentieth century, *Mormonism in Transition*, historian Thomas G. Alexander describes how one of the most important official changes made by the church was the establishment of a public relations bureau in 1902 to provide information to tourists. Within the first year, the small booth manned by local volunteers was overrun by public interest. By 1904, the church had erected permanent buildings on Temple Square and at the Saltair resort to hand out literature and answer questions for the some 200,000 tourists who visited each year.

Of course, not all changes made by Mormons to embrace tourism came down through official channels. This is to be expected. Within the text of the *Doctrine and Covenants* (58:26-29), for example, we read that Mormons are encouraged to "be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will" and to be "agents unto themselves." They are admonished, "he that doeth not anything until he is commanded" risks damnation, for "it is not meet that I [the Lord] should command in all things." Mormons are encouraged, even commanded, to be proactive, to walk beyond the light of revealed truth and to act in accordance with that which they believe is good and correct.[87] Such teachings are as common today as they were in the past. Understanding this, as a historian, I expect to see endeavoring Mormon businessmen, entrepreneurs, reporters, government officials, and others identifying needs within the community and taking action, not by seeking advice from priesthood leaders or the church, but according to intuition gained through personal experiences. While such individualism would net a variety of responses to somewhat similar challenges, when the responses are viewed collectively patterns begin to emerge.

One such pattern involved the use of nature, specifically land and water. Over and over again, Mormons used the land to promote aspects of their identity that best helped them negotiate social and political challenges and establish religious and cultural identities—just as it had in every decade since arriving in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847. As Mormons tried to foster a greater level of national acceptance and transition into the American mainstream, they found success through promoting the symbols, images, and landscapes of Utah. As in other aspects of their faith, Mormons offered the nation what they thought the nation most wanted: exotic, uniquely-American landscapes that promoted a sense of nationalism and fueled belief in American Exceptionalism. If Mormons could sell the nation the idea that Utah was home to uniquely American landscapes, then, they believed, they could prove their value and Americanness to America, in essence, justifying statehood and their America citizenship.

The Great Salt Lake

Three days after arriving in the Salt Lake Valley, Brigham Young led an exploring party of Saints to the shores of the Great Salt Lake to examine its water and revel in its uniqueness. Even the most avowed modern secularist could probably answer this question correctly: What are the two most famous salt lakes in the world? Of course, the answer is the Dead Sea, of biblical fame, and the Great Salt Lake, of Mormon fame. The parallel would not have escaped Young's little party, composed of Young himself along with Apostles Ezra T. Benson, Heber C. Kimball, Amasa Lyman, Orson Pratt, Willard Richards, George A. Smith, and Wilford Woodruff; and others. Together they rode towards a giant black rock that jutted out of the water on the southern shoreline of the lake, a landmark the Saints would later designate, unremarkably, Black Rock. There the party stopped and, within the recesses of the giant rock, privately disrobed, before venturing out into the buoyant and briny water. As Wilford Woodruff would write in his journal entry for the day, "No person could sink in it, but would roll and float on the surface like a dry log. We concluded that the Salt Lake was one of the wonders of the world."[88] From the moment of their arrival in the Salt Lake Valley onward, Mormons have used, with varying degrees of engagement, the Salt Lake as a site for recreation and amusement, as a naturally occurring curiosity and oddity, and as a landmark of local and national significance.

Recognizing immediately the lake's universal uniqueness and significance as a regional, if not national, geographic landmark, Brigham Young forever paired Mormonism with the lake by naming his city for it: the Great Salt Lake City.[89] After the first Mormon exploring party returned from the lake, Young promptly gathered together the church's senior leadership and together laid out the physical dimensions of the city, outlining everything from the size of the city blocks to the width of the streets and sidewalks. In laying out his vision for the Mormon Mecca, Young could have just as easily named the city for the recently martyred Joseph Smith, for the

city of Nauvoo they had been forced to abandoned, or for a location from the Bible or Book of Mormon as they would do later for the cities of Moroni, Nephi, and Bountiful.[90] However, by appropriating the region's most recognizable feature as the name for the Mormon capital, Young established the significance of the lake for Mormons and forever linked Utah's physical geography with its religious and cultural identity.

Despite the lake's distinctiveness as a so-called "wonder of the world," the Saints did not immediately begin developing the lake for economic purposes nor promote it for local, regional, or national consumption. Occasionally, the Saints would organize excursions to the lake for special events or to celebrate holidays, as they did on July 4, 1851 when Brigham Young took 150 wagon loads of pioneers to Black Rock for festivities.[91] Instead of commodifying the lake, the Saints looked within the city's limits to another local waterway to exploit for economic and entertainment purposes: Salt Lake City's natural hot springs. Across the United States, towns like White Sulfur Springs, West Virginia and Hot Springs, Arkansas had undergone surges in growth and in popularity during the second half of the eighteenth century by commodifying natural springs, offering wealthy tourists therapeutic bathing options and locals employment and a sense of pride.[92] The Saints followed suit, drawing upon the growing popularity of mineral springs and their health-restoring waters to promote their own warm springs. In 1849, the Saints in Salt Lake City authorized the construction of a bathhouse along the city's warm springs and used the site in the coming years as a special landmark for welcome visiting dignitaries. [93] At the time of construction, these springs offered the only warm sulfur baths in over a thousand miles.

During the 1850s, rumors began circulating that Mormon leaders were drawing up plans to build a resort on the shores of the Great Salt Lake equipped with bathhouses, a hotel, and even pleasure boats to ferry visitors around the lake. While these rumors stirred up local interest, the plans never materialized. Even without commercial establishments, the Saints continued to

patronize the lake despite the arduous and exhausting four-hour wagon ride each way. Local newspapers documented many of these excursions, especially the ones held to celebrate national and local holidays like the Fourth of July and Pioneer Day. Despite widespread interest in the lake, it was not until 1870 that two resorts were finally built to accommodate would-be visitors: Lake Side along the east shore of the lake and Lake Point along the south. For the first five years of operation, Lake Side, which was financed, built, and managed by John W. Young, Brigham Young's third son, flourished as the destination of choice. Young offered visitors an opportunity to swim in the Salt Lake, an event described by journalist Fitz Hugh Ludlow as, "the pleasant sense of being a pickle, such as a self-conscious gherkin might experience," or as William Elkanah Waters wrote in 1868, the opportunity to bob about "like an empty bottle."[94] Young had also purchased and operated the massive *City of Corinne* steamboat (the same steamboat Utah's National Guard would later blow up as part of the 1897 Pioneer Jubilee festivities as described in Chapter 1), charging riders twenty-five cents for a ride around the lake.

Located a few miles east of Black Rock on the southern shores of the Salt Lake, Lake Point's rise in popularity would mirror the growth of local railroads. After the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, other railroads quickly lay-down rails to fill in the Western grid. The Utah Central Railroad was completed in 1870, running north and south along the eastern shoreline of the Great Salt Lake connecting the Salt Lake and Ogden. Shortly thereafter, in 1875, the Utah and Nevada Railway that ran from Salt Lake City westward to Black Rock and then along the southern shores of the lake to Lake Point, was completed. With these developments, the 35-mile excursion from Salt Lake City to the lake was cut from a four-hour carriage ride to a comfortable hour-long train ride.[95] To compete with Lake Side, Dr. Jeter Clinton, the owner of Lake Point, established a resort that provided locals and tourists with the attractions he felt they most desired. First, Clinton built a massive, three-story, forty-room stone resort to allow travelers the option for comfortable overnight or extended stays. He added on over one hundred

bathhouses for visitors to change clothes and rinse off the water's salty residue, built a dancing hall, and paid to transport a buffalo heard onto nearby Antelope Island, whereby providing tourists with an opportunity to experience the "authentic" west. Clinton even purchased Young's *City of Corrine* and transferred its operating center to Lake Point. He also rechristened it the *General Garfield* after its most famous passenger, President-to-be James A. Garfield. As Lake Point's popularity grew (newspapers estimated the resort welcomed over 1500 visitors a day), Clinton began the process of recasting the site from a "pleasure resort" into "Utah's Great Sanitarium Resort" by advertising the water's rejuvenating powers to the new wave of health-seeking tourists who were flocking to the Sanitariums of Southern California and Colorado Springs, Colorado.[96]

With the sudden ease of beach excursions and the popularity of other Mormon-owned resorts that popped-up to compete with Lake Point and Lake Side, railroad executives saw an opportunity to follow suit by launching their own beach resorts. In 1886, the Denver & Rio Grande opened Lake Park at a site a few miles south of Lake Side, and in 1887, the Utah and Nevada Railway bought and enlarged Garfield Beach, located a few miles east of Lake Point. The two sites became fierce competitors, ever expanding to offer patrons the latest and greatest fads imported from eastern amusement parks and resorts in an on-going battle of one-upmanship. At Garfield Beach, visitors could stroll out onto the lake via a 300-foot-long pier that connected the shore to a 165-feet by 65-feet pavilion that rested atop hundreds of wooden pylons buried deep into the lake bed.[97] Visitors could wash up in one of over several hundred bathhouses, equipped with stately dressing rooms, washstands, and fresh-water showers before heading out for the evening activities. At Garfield, guests could eat French cuisine at a restaurant then visit the racetrack, shooting gallery, or bowling alley, before heading out onto the lake on twenty-five cent steamboat rides. When the Union Pacific Railroad purchased Garfield in 1892, they invested $150,000 to improve the infrastructure, including building fresh-water wells and installing a

generator to provide lights for after-dark swimming. At Lake Park, the Denver & Rio Grande hired architect Richard Kletting to design a large, open-air pavilion that doubled as a dancing hall. Visitors interested in an extended stay at Lake Park could rent summer cottages for weeks or months. Guests looking for amusement outside of the water could visit enjoy a merry-go-round, roller-skating, target shooting, and bowling alleys.[98]

To attract more visitors, the railroads ramped up publicity for their respective resorts through their promotional literature. In these travel vignettes, the railroads often stressed the novelty of the Great Salt Lake instead of focusing on their park's man-made attractions and amusements. By stressing American curiosities, like the salty lake, railroads were responding to the popularity of American tourists who traveled to Europe, Africa, and Asia in order to experience the sublime in nature. Railroads described the Great Salt Lake as "America's Dead Sea," just as it would describe other western sites as the "American Switzerland," "American Italy," "Egyptian Desert," and "French Rivera," in order to persuade would-be tourists to explore their own country.[99] An American Dead Sea offered something biblically enlightening, since it recalled a famous place in the Holy Land. Thus, besides its spa-appeal, the Great Salt Lake offered even non-Mormons the chance to see a decent substitute for the place where Jericho's walls fell down. Few places in the West thus combined the power of nature's sublime with an Old World cultural comparison. In 1891, the Denver & Rio Grande described the lake as "The most wonderful feature of all this wonderful tour, the mightiest marvel of all-marvelous Utah, an ocean of majestic mystery clad in beauty divine, its Great Salt Lake, the American Dead Sea." The article continued by referring to the lake as one of "earth's weird wonders," again stressing its novelty and foreignness, before concluding that the lake "has but one rival or peer—the miracle-made sea whose waves of doom and oblivions roll[ed] over Sodom and Gomorrah, the Chicagos of forty centuries ago.[100]

By the early 1890s, Utah's lakeside resorts were booming; tourists and locals flocked to the lake in records numbers as newer, bigger, and fancier resorts continued to be built-up along the shores of the Great Salt Lake.[101] As hundreds of thousands of pleasure-seekers looked to the lake, the Mormon Church recognized an opportunity to signal the mainstreaming of its people through establishing its own resort: Saltair. On January 14, 1893, just less than three years after Wilford Woodruff renounced the Church's support for the practice of polygamy, the Mormon-owned *Deseret News* announced construction was underway on a massive sanitarium along the southern shore of the Great Salt Lake, a resort that would rival the greatest amusement parks of the world. For years, as local Mormons flocked to the railroad's resorts, church officials feared members would be corrupted by the "nefarious" designs of non-Mormon patrons. The Church warned members of the spiritual dangers that lurked within the pursuit of pleasure. An editorial penned in the *Deseret News* cautioned young people to be weary of the "villainous arts of practiced voluptuaries" and "degraded character destroyers."[102] By constructing their own resort at Saltair, the church hoped to offer visitors both a wholesome environment, safe from corrupting influences that plagued other resorts, and a state-of-the-art amusement park that would promote Utah's and Mormon's "name and fame" throughout the world as the "Coney Island of the West."[103]

Construction on the new resort, designed by architect Richard Kletting, who previously designed Lake Park's pavilion, began in early 1893. By then, the Saltair Railway Company, a small line owned and operated by the same Mormon leaders who were the primary stockholders of Saltair Beach Company, namely George Q. Cannon, Joseph F. Smith, Isaac A. Clatyon, and Nephi W. Clayton, had connected Salt Lake City to Saltair via a fifteen-mile-long railroad.[104] By building their own line, Mormons owned and operated, and thus were positioned to financially benefit from, all aspects of this endeavor.

When completed, Saltair was magical. The *Deseret News* described it as a "magnificent pavilion, rising, Venice-like, out of the waves in stupendous and graceful beauty, deepened in its semi-Moorish architectural lines, the suspicion that what one saw was not firm structural reality but a rather delightful oriental dream."[105] By all descriptions, the pavilion was massive, roughly the same size as the Mormon tabernacle in Salt Lake City. Like the pavilion at Garfield Beach, Saltair's pavilion was built atop wooden pilings, numbering over twenty-five-hundred, each nearly a foot in diameter and twelve feet apart. From this base, a giant dome rose over one-hundred feet into the sky, offering those who braved the staircases to the top, a majestic view of the surroundings. At each corner of the 250-feet by 140-feet building stood small domes, each outlined with light bulbs, "whose halos of light at night," remembered Wallace Stegner, "pales the stars." Jutting out four-thousand feet from either side of the pavilion stretched two-crescent shaped walkways, lined with 1,200 bathhouses that provided showers of fresh water hauled in daily by tank cars from the Wasatch.[106] Stairs led down to the water at regular intervals, offering bathers, said the *Deseret News*, an opportunity to sneak into the lake "unseen by the mighty crowd of spectators and avoid the light remarks and ridicule of vulgar and unrefined if clad in the too often abbreviated and unsightly bathing suit."[107]

Saltair opened for business on Memorial Day 1893 to great fanfare. Over seven thousand people boarded the trains bound for Saltair in Salt Lake City to attend the formal opening held on June 8th. After a few "stirring selections" from Peterson's band, Territorial Utah Governor Caleb W. West praised the Saints, especially the "band of pioneers," who have "wrenched from the . . . sage brush deserts, fertility and productiveness until the city and valley has an immense garden and population, prosperity and progress were the results." Although "eastern people were of the opinion that we [Utahans] were out of civilization," West pointed to the Saltair resort as proving otherwise. "Magnificent Saltair," he argued, is ". . . superior to all others."[108] The *Deseret News*

would write of Saltair in a similar vein, describing Saltair as "Our Great Advancement," and cites it as a symbol of the Saints transformation. "The eyes of enterprise and hands of thrift once turned to the brine-washed shores have drawn attention and people; of the latter the number has increased so steadily and so largely that today there is not a watering place in the whole country that is better known or more desirable and we question of there is any that is more extensively patronized."[109]

Like other amusements parks that rapidly proliferated across the United States at the end of the nineteenth century, parks like Boston's Paragon Park, New Jersey's Atlantic City, Chicago's Cheltenham Beach, Riverview, and White City, Denver's Manhattan Beach, San Francisco's The Chutes, New York City's Coney Island, and even some of Utah's other lakeside resorts, Saltair provided visitors inexpensive entertainment that functioned as a momentary liberation from the doldrums of modern convention, routine, and labor. Life in Salt Lake City could be stifling, even oppressive, as Mormon leaders exercised varying degrees of control over political, social, and business arenas, setting demands on individual labor and behavior.[110] Amusement parks, like Salt Lake's "bathing" resorts, offered visitors space to be free of such demands, to tease out accustomed social roles and values, and to behave in ways not appropriate elsewhere. These sites operated as sanctioned spaces for people to mock the established social order as had carnivals and festivals, such as Saturnalia and the Feast of Fools, of the past.[111] By establishing their own resort, Mormon leaders hoped to exercise some control over the extent of open rebellion at Saltair by removing some of the dangers and evil influences that plagued other establishments. It is worth recognizing that, as American Studies scholar John Kasson explains in *Amusing the Million,* his analysis of the rise of Coney Island Amusement Park, the ideas of mass culture, mass enlightenment, and mass fun all fueled each other at this time in American history. The Columbian Exposition in Chicago also showed the phenomenon. Utah proved no exception.

If Chicago's nominal theme was celebrating Columbus' 1492 arrival, its real secret was fun in the name of uplift. The same could be said of Saltair.

While the Church did its part to curb rowdiness (for example, in 1902 Joseph F. Smith ordered the Saltair's saloon to shut down and forbade the sale or consumption of "intoxicating drinks" at Saltair), visitors to the resort would still find ways to subvert the Church's control or influence others to do so.[112] The June 1895 edition of the *Young Woman's Journal,* a monthly magazine written by church leaders for the church's young women, described Saltair as a "beautiful" and "magnificent sea palace," but cautioned the girls to visit the resort only when accompanied by an "older person." The article continued:

> It is not meet nor proper for our girls to go even to Saltair alone or with other girls as young and thoughtless as themselves. When you go, let the loveliness and purity of nature enter your soul, and strengthen it for the cares of your home life. Seek to enjoy it spiritually as well as physically. Only so can you get the greatest good from . . . Saltair.[113]

The *Deseret News* offered a similar caution to parents in June 1902, warning them of the dangers that awaited unattended youth at Saltair. The article described how "Many a young man or woman has been led astray as a consequence of acquaintances at [pleasure resorts], and the indulgence of that which is forbidden."[114] As is evidenced by the number of newspaper crime blotters, not all parents or young people listened to the warnings. On August 31, 1895, the *Salt Lake Tribune*, the "Gentile" alternative to the Mormon-owned *Deseret News*, published an account of Carl McMillian and Laura Ford's public foible at Saltair. The two lovers were "charged with having committed fornication" when officers found them "under suspicious circumstances on the north pier."[115] In July 1897, the *Tribune* wrote of "two young men," George Vincent and T. R. Smith, "who went in bathing at Saltair on Sunday without first donning suitable costumes" and were sentence to thirty days in jail.

The two most popular activities at Saltair were swimming (or "bathing" as it was called) and dancing. Visitors to Saltair could rent bathing suits and towels for the day, though supplies were limited and were often sold out on warm days. In 1909, Saltair management ordered over two-thousand new bathing suits, bringing their on-hand total to 4,237. Additionally, Saltair owned and rented out 5,839 towels.[116] Photographs from this time show small clusters of swimmers, all wearing one-piece black bathing suits, either standing waist-deep in the water or bobbing around. Roy Gibson would remember that most visitors would go swimming just to see if they would float. "They couldn't possibly believe that someone could lay their body down in water without having to swim, or do something to keep afloat. But when they got in this water and found that they could float in twelve to fourteen inches of water, it would just flabbergast them." Gibson recalled large parties of adults who would approach the pier and look down at the water, uninterested in actually getting in. They instead "would designate one of the younger people to go swimming, and [they] would just watch them. One would go in, then another would go, and pretty quick the whole group would be swimming."[117]

Because of the high salt levels, according to one account the water at this time was about 27% salt, four-times as concentrated as today, bathers would float.[118] Some bathers found creative ways to improvise. Roy Gibson recalled, on windy days, bathers rented umbrellas and used them as sails to effortlessly float around the lake.[119] As a general rule, bathers tried not to go underwater or splash water into their eyes. Western writer Wallace Stegner candidly recalled his childhood on the lake, remembering that, although "many people find brine bathing exhilarating, it is a long way from comfortable." He continued:

> You have to learn not to dive, not only because the brine eats at eyes and nostrils like sulfuric acid, but also because the water is so heavy with salt that it can break a diver's neck. You have to learn not to rub your eyes, or if you do, to suck your finger first. And when you emerge into the drying sun and wind you find yourself, unless there is a fresh-water shower handy, coated with salt like a codfish. There is no pleasure quite equal to a hard, salt-coated sunburn.[120]

Photographs and postcards from the turn-of-the-century likewise stress the ease and novelty of bathing in the Salt Lake. After Congress passed legislation in 1898 allowing private postcards to be mailed with low-postage, picture postcards became a growing hobby in America, especially for tourists who hoped to share with family and friends picturesque scenes from their travels accompanied by their musings.[121] Postcards from Saltair often used the Moorish-building and its massive wings as the striking backdrop, hovering on pylons over the bright blue waters, as swimmers dominate the foreground. Most postcards stressed the ease and novelty of bathing in the salty water. This point is amplified, for example, by photographs of bathers who pose reclined on their backs with both hands and feet fully visible, sticking out of the water. In one such postcard, titled appropriately, “The Floaters,” three men and one woman form a lopsided circle, each facing the photographer with legs fully extended, feet raised, and arms visible. The men and women appear to be relaxed, smiling at the camera. Another postcard, postdated September 5, 1911, shows a small crowd of bathers standing mid-shin in the water, a clear indication of the water’s depth. Directly in front and to the side of these “bathers” are a few women, looking directly at the camera, clearly floating in the shallow water with their hand and feet elevated. Florence, the author of the postcard, echoes this message on the back, writing, “Here is where I went bathing yesterday. Couldn’t make my feet stay down but could float forever.” A common variant of this style of postcard is one in which the bather’s float in the water while reading a newspaper or book. To those unfamiliar with the water’s buoyance, this pose would seem impossible and stress the exoticness of the water.

Other postcards stressed the novelty of the salt water and its buoyance. Some postcards show groups of bathers crowded around a giant white buoy that floated near the pier. The buoy is intentionally large and constructed in such a way that entire parties of bathers could climb atop it or sit on its ledges. The white buoy floats in stark contrast to the blue waters. Painted along its side, a bright blue message taunted the bathers, “Saltair: Try to Sink.” In the postcards, groups of

ten, twenty, or thirty-plus people stand atop the floating device, trying but ultimately failing in their efforts to submerge it.

In their advertisements and promotional literature, Mormons did not actively sell Saltair to the general public for its massive dance floor, one of the largest in the world; for its modern attractions like the "Ride Through the Clouds" roller coaster, the "Ye Olde Mille," a boat-ride through darkened waterways designed for couples, or the amusement park games like bowling, slot-machines, billiards, Ferris wheel, merry-go-round, photograph gallery, or shooting gallery; or for the specialty acts of musicians, comedians, and daredevils that performed there. Instead, in print and photograph advertisements like post cards, Mormons promoted Saltair as a place to explore an American curiosity, as a novelty experience, as an exotic American landmark. Established during the early years of Mormonism's push to accommodate to the political, economic, religious, and cultural demands of the nation, Saltair was a place for Mormons to negotiate the nation's demands and demonstrate to visitors their transformation. In the way Mormons promoted Saltair, it is clear that they were not trying to sell America Mormonism. Instead, Mormons promoted Saltair as an extension of the Great Salt Lake, a uniquely American landscape/waterway that could fill Americans with nationalistic pride. Mormons hoped to convince Americans that the land/water, while exotic and foreign, need not be foreign, but could instead could be seen as an essential component of America's physical identity. Utah was home to American landscapes just as it was home to Americans.

Figure 4-2. “Beautiful Saltair and Bathers, Great Salt Lake, Utah”

Figure 4-3. Photograph of Bathers

Figure 4-4. Postcard.

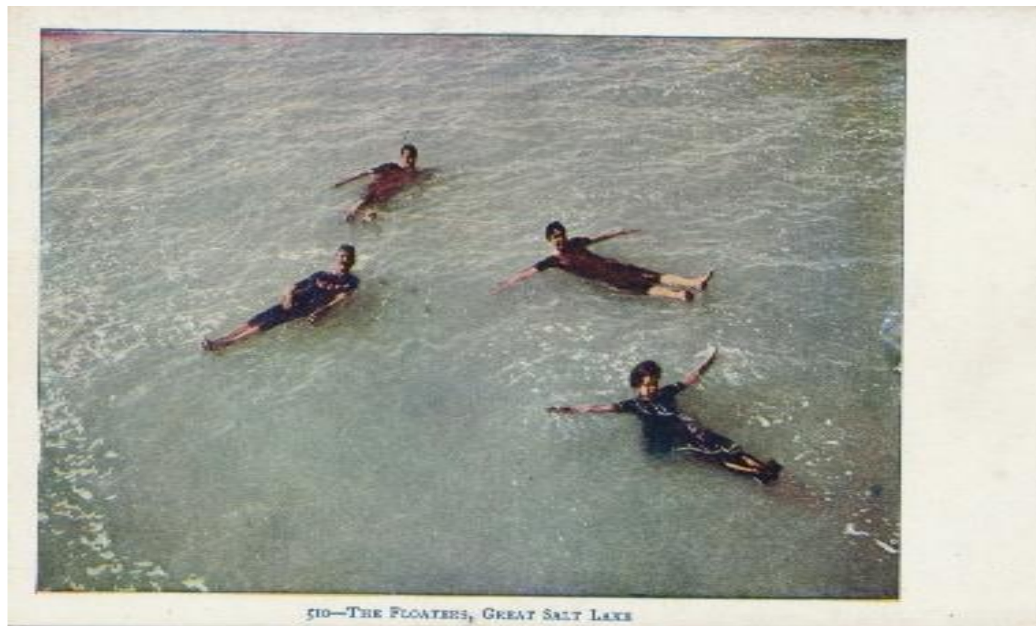

Figure 4-5. “The Floaters”

Mormons and Mountains

Sacred events often occur on mountains. Moses climbed Mt. Sinai to behold the burning bush, and, later, receive the Ten Commandments. Zeus and the Greek pantheon of gods ruled from Mt. Olympus. Hawaiians revere the fire goddess Pele, atop volcanic Moana Kea and Moana Lea. Since the early days of Mormonism, mountains and hills have played important roles in the formation of the Church and in its attempts to establish a religious framework.[122] When the Angel Moroni visited Joseph Smith in 1823, he repeatedly quoted several Old Testament prophecies, including Joel 2:32—"for in Mt. Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance." The angel also spoke to Smith of a set of Gold Plates buried in a nearby hill. Smith wrote that he immediately recognized the hill due to its "considerable size . . . the most elevated of any in the neighborhood." In time, the record inscribed on the plates would be translated into the Book of Mormon; the hill would be deified by the Saints in the early twentieth century and continues to function today as a pilgrimage site and home to an annual historical pageant.[123]

As the Saints underwent successive relocations in the 1830s and 40s, the function and role of mountains in Mormon cosmology underwent gradual change. For some, the mountains would stand as a symbol of safety and refuge, as the eventually home of God's people. These Saints would look to Joseph Smith's 1842 "Rocky Mountain Prophecy," which said, "the Saints would continue to suffer much affliction and would be driven to the Rocky Mountains" but there would "become a mighty people."[124] Through his own visions, Brigham Young too claimed to have seen the West and "its many beautiful hills" as the eventual home for the Saints.

Upon arriving in the West, the Saints marked the mountains as sacred, building upon the Judeo-Christian mythology that placed significant revelatory experiences atop mountains. In the Old Testament, Abraham was tested upon Mount Moriah; Moses received the Ten Commandments upon Mount Sinai; Elijah called down fire from the heavens on Mount Carmel.

In the New Testament, Jesus traveled into the mountains to pray. He is tempted by Satan upon an "exceeding high mountain." The site of Transfiguration was Mount Tabor. Even in the Book of Mormon, God speaks to man in the mountains.[125] With the understanding that mountains in the past were holy sites for communing with God, Mormons constructed their most sacred buildings atop hills and taught that temples were the "House of the Lord." In 1884 and 1888, Mormons finished construction on the Logan and Manti temples, each situated on a hilltop.

While religious appreciation of mountains is a well-established, widespread, and ancient tradition, as seen from the examples above, Mormonism's aesthetic appreciation of mountains was obviously a relatively recent construction. On the other hand, the Book of Mormon provides a firm context within which to interpret North America through an ancient lens. Nevertheless, the western mountains were new, not ancestrally remembered, to the first pioneers. Mormon aesthetic views of mountains were heavily influenced by the artists and literati that followed in the tradition of the Romantics and Transcendentalists of the early- and mid-nineteenth century. Believing that nature enhanced one's chances of knowing God, a new band of European-trained American painters led by Thomas Cole descended upon the mountains of New Hampshire. These painters, members of the Hudson River School, looked to the mountains for inspiration and hoped to capture in their art the sublime. As the nation expanded with the Louisiana Purchase and the Mexican War, this band of artists and literati looked from New Hampshire to the Rocky Mountains, the so-called "Switzerland of America." There, artists like Albert Bierstadt and Thomas Moran, captured the imagination of America with their massive paintings of the Rocky Mountains. Gradually, the mountains were infused with symbolic significance and nationalistic pride, as the nation remade nature in its own image.

Mormon views of mountains would follow a similar trajectory as the Saints grew to appreciate the aesthetics of their home. Echoing the growing art scene of the east coast, Salt Lake City, too, was home to a vibrant art scene, the "one island of 'culture' between Denver and San

Francisco."[126] Some converts to the Church, like Alfred Lambourne and H. L. A. Culmer, had received their artistic training in Europe prior to joining with the Saints in Utah. They established studios and captured the Utah landscapes in their paintings. Lambourne also worked as a writer, who followed in the footsteps of Henry David Thoreau by sequestering himself for a year along the shores of the Great Salt Lake and writing of his experiences in nature. In 1891, Lambourne published *Scenic Utah,* featuring sketches of his favorite scenes in Utah, including the resort at Garfield Beach. In the book's introduction, Lambourne laments the fact that Utah's "scenic beauties" have been overlooked by the nation who focus instead on the scenery of Oregon, Washington, California, and Arizona. "The mountains of Utah," Lambourne wrote, "show every expression of the higher picturesque. Heaved up in pale granite masses, towering high in dark quartzite peaks and ridges, rising in vast waves of many-colored sandstones, with cliffs and precipices of slate, of limestone, of lava, of conglomerate . . . [the mountains] challenge comparison with any other mountains of the West."[127] By the 1880s, as Jared Farmer notes in his excellent book on the cultural transformation of Utah Valley's Mount Timpanogos, the aesthetic appreciation of mountains would be cemented among Utah's Mormons and featured heavily in local promotional publications.[128] In the following decades, Mormons would look for ways to use the aesthetic popularity of the mountains and their identity as "Rocky Mountain Saints" in their larger quest of accommodation, especially during the early-twentieth century as misunderstandings about polygamy again propelled Mormonism into the unsavory national spotlight.

The trouble began almost immediately after the Utah state legislature elected Reed Smoot, a popular local Republican and member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, to the United States Senate in 1903. Because of his position within the Mormon Church, a highly publicized and contentious four-year battle ensued as a group of political, business, and religious

leaders tried to oust him on the grounds that his position within the LDS church disqualified him from political office. In the same way, decades later, some Americans felt John F. Kennedy or Mitt Romney's religious beliefs prevented them from defending the U.S. Constitution or represent the people, so too did some argue Reed Smoot was unfit for political office. During the contentious trial, Smoot was able to align with the Senate's Republican leadership and received the support of President Theodore Roosevelt. As a result, even though the Senate committee recommended his expulsion, the Senate ultimately voted in 1907 to let him keep his seat and he kept it until 1932.[129]

During the trial, questions arose about Mormons' continued practice of polygamy, a practice Mormon leadership publically and vehemently denounced, although, as would be uncovered, some Mormons secretly continued the practice.[130] This variance between doctrine and practice frequently eluded mainstream awareness. In mainstream Christianity, few would be scandalized by the non-uniform practice of, say, loving thy neighbor as thyself, or imperfect observance of the Ten Commandments. In like fashion, as the LDS Church struggled to bring its marriage institution into conformity with propriety, there were some recalcitrant who resisted. But given the salacious nature of the issue, mainstream Americans frequently ignored the official LDS position and concentrated – with unseemly interest, let it be said – upon the supposedly widespread polygamous practice. Recent cable television shows reveal that this process is not entirely obsolete, either. In any event, the problem for Mormons was that while their established leaders worked against polygamy, anything short of instantaneous and universal acceptance of the rules led the mainstream culture to suspect that Mormons remained wedded (plurally!) to the unsanctioned practice. The accusations reopened old wounds in the ongoing, often contentious relationship between Mormonism and America. Many Americans felt deceived by the "duplicitous" Mormons, a sentiment captured by a *New York Times* editorial that described Utah as a "foreign element in the American Union."[131] Despite the steps taken over the previous

decade to adjust and conform to the demands of the nation and their efforts to promote themselves as quintessential Americans, Mormons were once again characterized as foreign and as Others. The *Times* editorial even questioned whether Utah belonged in the Union, believing Mormons had deceived their way through the statehood process into the United States.

> The testimony taking before the committee at Washington is making it increasingly clear that Reed Smoot is the agent and instrument of a theocratic organization which has, by trick and device, imposed itself upon the country as one of the United States. . . . About fourteen years ago . . . the polygamous theocracy began to believe that it would be much safer as a State than as a Territory. It also became aware that it could become a State only by false pretenses. . . . It pretended to have abandoned polygamy and the presiding theocrat put forth a manifest to that effect. The result was that the country was deceived, its agent, Congress, was deceived, and the theocracy or "conspiracy," got itself admitted and recognized as a State. Thereupon it began to remove the mask and to reassert itself as a foreign element in the American Union owing a higher allegiance than that it owed to the United States, and sending to Washington representatives of the principles and practices which it had obtained Statehood by falsely pretending to have abandoned.[132]

As the Smoot trial was underway in the nation's capital, bringing negative publicity to the Mormon church, forcing its leadership to stand trial and undergo embarrassing cross-examination in front of the Senate, and erasing much of the mutual goodwill generated over the previous decade, Utahans back home did not stand by idly waiting for the storm to pass, but instead actively engaged in a new movement designed to sway popular opinions and bring American tourists to the West. The movement was called "See American First."[133] Surprised by reports that American tourists spent over $150 million a year in Europe, western political, business, and civic leaders sought out new ways to bring some of the tourist money westward. The "See America First" movement was the brainchild of Fisher Sanford Harris, the manager of Salt Lake City's Knutsford Hotel, who concocted the idea in hopes of boosting local business. He envisioned a massive advertising campaign designed to promote the aesthetics and resources of the western states. For his plan to work, Harris needed the financial support of leaders from other western municipalities, states, and businesses. In 1905, functioning as the general manager of the

Salt Lake City Commercial Club, Harris called for a conference to be held in Salt Lake City to discuss the “See American First” idea, a call that was met with overwhelmingly positive support from both westerners *and* easterners. The *New York Tribune* picked up on Harris’ story and predicted his “new Western idea” would “enter upon a campaign of education whereby the inhabitants of the rest of the country shall be made acquainted with the scenic beauties and climatic advantages of the regions which are now to a certain degree neglected by the vacation seeker.”[134] On January 25, 1906, a group of 125 delegates representing politicians, businessmen, and boosters from around the country met in Salt Lake City to settle on a plan of action. The delegates agreed that American’s failure to visit the scenic attractions of the West was not due to a lack of patriotism, but instead to a lack of knowledge of these attractions. To counter this problem, the group decided on creating “a grand, comprehensive scheme of publicity . . . calling into its service the best artistic and literary skill of the world” to promote the West and connect it elevate it status as a symbol of America.[135]

In December 1908, Harris and a small group of writers published the first edition of *Western Monthly: A Magazine Devoted to the Art, Literature, Progress, and Development of the Inter-Mountain West*. The magazine functioned as the “Official Organ of the See American First League,” and provided readers with detailed instructions about both the scenic and commercial experiences available in Salt Lake City and Utah. The articles, artwork, and advertisements drew heavily from the popular Western narrative, placing fictional stories about larger-than-life cowboys and Indians side-by-side with photographs and drawings of Utah’s rugged mountains or accounts of Utah’s transformation from a desert into a thriving, civilized community. The magazine continued until Harris’ death in November 1909.

As Harris was busy writing propaganda pieces for his magazine in Salt Lake City, a mountainous region of Southern Utah, first settled by Mormons in 1862, began gaining national attention for its beauty and grandeur, and Reed Smoot was gaining valuable experience as Utah’s

Junior-Senator. Early in his term, Smoot found opportunities to echo Harris' goal of endorsing Utah tourism by touting environmental conservation and promoting Utah's mountains to the American public. As a member and chair of the Senate Public Lands Committee, Smoot supported conservation policies backed by President Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot, head of the U.S. Forest Service, to protect the West's forests, streams, canyons, and geological formations. He sided with John Muir and the Sierra Club in a failed effort to stop the construction of a dam in Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy Valley.[136] He supported policies geared towards efficiently managing and coordinating the land and the promotion of tourism to encourage others to visit and enjoy it. He worked to help establish the National Park Service.[137] His legislative agenda on issues of land and preservation uniquely qualified Smoot to fight for his most lasting legacy: turning, as Thomas Alexander described, "the spectacular red and white sandstone monoliths that Mormon pioneers had explored and settled in the mid-nineteenth century" into Zion National Park.[138]

The 1919 legislation establishing Zion Canyon as Utah's first National Park did more than preserve the land as a national treasure. The legislation signaled to Mormons and non-Mormons alike that Utah's landscapes were foremost *American* landscapes, a designation that seems obvious in hindsight, but after decades of being denied statehood, stereotyped, and ignored, Mormons recognized in this designation that, to some degree, the nation finally viewed them as American.[139]

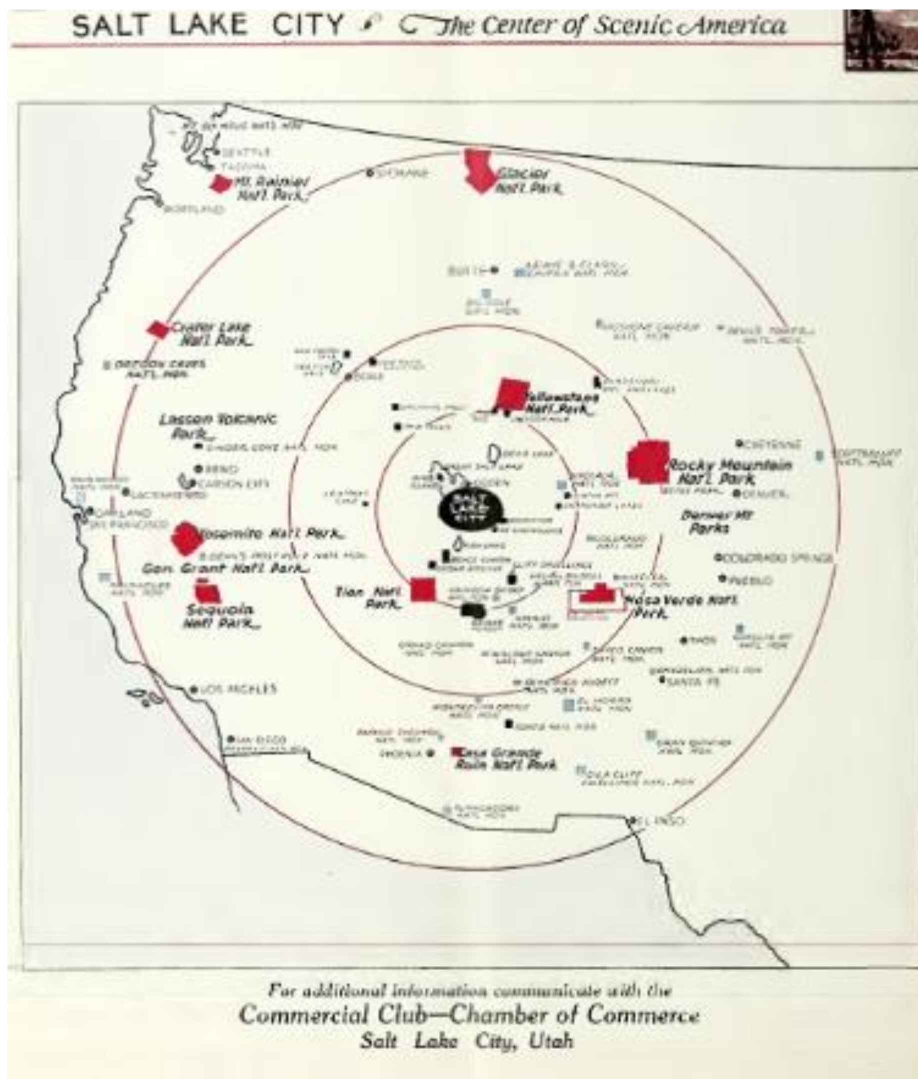

Figure 4-6. “The Center of Scenic America”: This map, published as the centerpiece of a promotional booklet called “Salt Lake City: The Center of Scenic America” by the Salt Lake City Commercial Club, places Salt Lake City as the epicenter of the West’s landscapes.

Conclusion

Throughout the history of their religion and their emerging culture, Mormons accorded notions of "place" great significance within the faith. This significance of "where" was perhaps even greater than that of "when." The knowledge of their purpose on earth, of knowing where they came from and where they are going, infuses modern Mormons with great confidence. This confidence, particularly during an era when mainstream Americans experience no small degree of postmodern confusion, contributes greatly to the contemporary stereotype of LDS members as a people among, but also apart from, their fellow Americans. Given the church's international outreach, the prospect has world-wide implications. Speaking with Mormon missionaries, one gets the impression that they are all but anxious to impart their knowledge and understanding of "place" with others. Individual Mormons seem obsessed with establishing the right-types of places: a sacred temple or a Christ-centered home. The final pages of Mormon scriptures include detailed maps outlining the location of significant biblical events and those from the Church's early history. Over the past one hundred years, the Church has aggressively purchased these significance places from early Church history for the purpose of preservation and pilgrimage. Mormons in the twenty-first century can visit Carthage Jail in Illinois, the jail where Joseph and Hyrum Smith were martyred. Visitors can run their fingers through the bullet holes in the door. Mormon in New York can visit the Smith's home and walk through the Sacred Grove, site of Smith's theophany. The City of Nauvoo has been rebuilt on the banks of the Mississippi River, complete with a functioning temple patterned after the one the Saints watched burn as they fled westward.

Over the past two centuries, Mormons have developed various *senses* of place, in part, due to their evolving views of the land, their location, the changing role of land in their religious cosmology, and the demands placed upon believers by outsiders. But Mormons also recognized

in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, that the nation grew hungry for western landscapes. American identity seemed to hinge around the grandeur, ruggedness, and sublime beauty of mountains and the barren, lifelessness of deserts. This moment of national interest in the West coincided with Mormons interest in assimilating to the demands of the East. In packaging and commodifying the land, Mormons became like the tourist workers described earlier by Hal Rothman. Mormons promoted a version of themselves that "look like themselves but who act and believe differently as they learn to market their place and its, and their identity." Mormons packaged the land at first to as a mechanism for constructing religious and cultural identity but later as a tool for negotiating their relationship with the nation.

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[1] While it is challenging to diagnose across the years, most scholars have concluded that Young's "mountain fever" was probably Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, a disease contracted from a tick bite. See John G. Turner, *Brigham Young: Pioneer Prophet* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012), 168.

[2] Elden J. Watson, ed., *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846-1847* (Salt Lake City: Smith Secretarial Service, 1968) 564.

[3] For more on the folklore of Mormon settlement, see Jessie L. Embry and William A. Wilson, "Folk Ideas of Mormon Pioneers." *Dialogue: A Journal for Mormon Thought* 31 (Fall 1998): 81-99; Richard H. Jackson, "The Mormon Experience: The Plains as Sinai, the Great Salt Lake as the Dead Sea, and the Great Basin as a Desert-Cum-Promised Land," *Journal of Historical Geography* 18 (January 1992): 41-58; Richard C. Poulsen, *The Landscape of the Mind: Cultural Transformation of the American West,* American University Studies, American Literature Series, Vol. 23 (New York: Peter Lang, 1992), 103-16; Richard C. Poulson, "This is the Place: Myth and Mormonism." *Western Folklore* 36, no. 3 (July 1977): 246-52.

[4] It is important to reiterate here that in his diary entry for July 24, 1847, Woodruff made no mention of Young's statement. However, the only reference I have been able to locate that connects Young with this statement comes not from July 24 but July 28. According to the diary entry of Levi Jackman, on July 28 Brigham Young called the pioneers together for an evening meeting to discuss settlement: "The camp was called togeather to say whear the City should be built. After a number had spoken on the subject a voat was calld for unanimosiley aggread that this was the spot After that Pres Young said tha[t] this is the place. he knew it as soon as he came in sight of it and he had seen this vearey spot before." "Levi Jackman, diary," MS 79, 19th & 20th Century Western & Mormon Americana; L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

[5] Wilford Woodruff, in *The Utah Pioneers* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Printing and Publishing Establishment, 1880), 23; quoted in B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Century One,* 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1930), 3:224.

[6] Jessie L. Embry and William A. Wilson, “Folk Ideas of Mormon Pioneers.” *Dialogue: A Journal for Mormon Thought* 31 (Fall 1998): 99.

[7] Title comes from Mormon historian Leonard J. Arrington’s biography, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985). Author Mason Locke “Parson” Weems used quasi-historical materials to create and spread American myths and popularize national legends during the early nineteenth century. He published *The Life of Washington* in 1800. For more on Weems myth-making, see Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 25-32; Karal Ann Marling, *George Washington Slept Here: Colonial Revivals and American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

[8] Richard C. Poulson, “This is the Place: Myth and Mormonism.” *Western Folklore* 36, no. 3 (July 1977): 246. To read more about this folk belief’s pervasiveness in modern Mormon cultures, see Jessie L. Embry and William A. Wilson, “Folk Ideas of Mormon Pioneers.” *Dialogue: A Journal for Mormon Thought* 31 (Fall 1998): 81-99. In their field surveys, Embry and Wilson found an overwhelming majority (nearly 90 percent of the 1,112 Mormons interviewed) believed Young said something along the lines of “this is the place.”

[9] In 2003 the Utah State legislature voted to change Utah’s state song from “Utah, We Love Thee” to “Utah, This is the Place.” The song includes the following stanza, cementing Utah’s mythic founding narrative as fact: “It was Brigham Young who led the pioneers across the plains. They suffered with the trials they had to face. With faith they kept on going till they reached the Great Salt Lake Here they heard the words . . . ‘THIS IS THE PLACE!”

[10] See Otto Rank, “The Myth of the Birth of the Hero,” in *In Quest of the Hero* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990); Lord Raglan, “The Hero of Tradition,” *Folklore* 45, no. 3 (September 1934): 212-231.

[11] For more on the influence of Millennialism on Mormonism, see Grant Underwood, *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

[12] In the aftermath of Joseph Smith’s martyrdom, a division arose among the Mormon faithful concerning the rightful heir of Joseph Smith’s mantle of Prophet and President of the Church. During this crisis of leadership, the schism arose as the majority followed Brigham Young to Utah while others stayed behind and coalesced around Joseph Smith III, Sidney Rigdon, James Strang, or Alpheus Cutler. For those Saints who carried doubts about the succession of prophetic leadership within the church, the quote Woodruff attributed to Young may have helped persuade them by entwining prophetic vision and direction with Utah’s settlement. For more on the splintering of Mormonism, see *Differing Visions: Dissenters in Mormon History.* Eds. Roger D. Launius and Linda Thatcher (Champaign, University of Illinois Press: 1994). For more on the impact of Woodruff’s message and the development of a Mormon Foundation Myth, see Richard H. Jackson, “The Mormon Experience: The Plains as Sinai, the Great Salt Lake as the Dead Sea, and the Great Basin as a Desert-Cum-Promised Land,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 19 (Jan. 1992): 49; Richard C. Poulson, *The Landscape of the Mind: Cultural Transformation of the American West*, American University Studies, American Literature Series, Vol. 23 (New York: Peter Land, 1992); Richard C. Poulson, “’This is the Place’: Myth and Mormonism,” *Western Folklore* 36 (July 1977): 246-52.

[13] Richard C. Poulsen, *The Landscape of the Mind: Cultural Transformation of the American West,* American University Studies, American Literature Series, Vol. 23 (New York: Peter Lang, 1992), 103-16;

[14] W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[15] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 volumes. Introduction and notes by B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City, 1902-1932) 1: 189-90.

[16] *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, vol. 5 (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909), 85.

[17] Kent C. Ryden, *Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing, and the Sense of Place*. (Iowa City, University of Iowa Press, 1993), xiv.

[18] James R. Shortridge, *The Middle West: Its Meaning in American Culture*. (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas: 1989), xiii.

[19] Important scholarship from cultural geographers that demonstrates this methodology, see Carl O. Sauer, "The Morphology of Landscape," *University of California Publications in Geography* 2 (2): 19-53; Fred B. Kniffen, "Material Culture in the Geographical Interpretation of the Landscape," in *The Human Mirror: Material and Spatial Images of Man*, ed. By Miles E. Richardson (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974), 252-267; Fred B. Kniffen, "The Study of Folk Architecture: Geographical Perspectives," in *Cultural Diffusion and Landscapes. Selections by Fred B. Kniffen*, ed. H. Jesse Walker and Randall A. Detro (Louisiana State University, Geoscience and Man, Vol. 27 (1990), 35-45; Peirce K. Lewis, "Axioms for Reading the Landscape: Some Guides to the American Scene," in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays,* ed. Donald W. Meinig (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); and Wilbur Zelinsky, *The Cultural Geography of the United States* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1973).

[20] In their analysis of ancient texts and archetypes, Frazier wrote of the significance of a Golden Bough found in a "sacred grove;" Campbell recognized the universality of the notion of a "World Navel" or *axis mundi*. For Campbell, certain landscapes associated with the hero's journey become "marked and sanctified," "made alive with symbolical suggestion," and served as useful sites for pilgrims seeking a connection with the past. See Sir James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, vol. 1 (New York City: MacMillan, 1922); Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Face.* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1949), 40-46.

[21] James R. Shortridge, *The Middle West: Its Meaning in American Culture*. (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas: 1989), xiii.

[22] Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness.* Vol. 67. (London: Pion, 1976), 24. Kent C. Ryden, *Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing, and the Sense of Place*. (Iowa City, University of Iowa Press, 1993), 37.

[23] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979), 54. See also Peirce K. Lewis, "Axioms for Reading the Landscape: Some Guides to the American Scene," in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays,* ed. Donald W. Meinig (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

[24] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979), 183-84.

[25] Other folklorists have been more advocates for human agency in the landscape. See, for example, Simon J. Bronner, "Concepts in the Study of Material Aspects of Folk Culture," *Folklore Forum* 12 (2/3): 133-172.

[26] David W. Grua, “Memoirs of the Persecuted: Persecution, Memory, and the West as a Mormon Refuge” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 2008), 61-92.

[27] B. H. Roberts, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Books, 1960), 5: 157. For an accounting of the persecutions Smith’s suffered, see Richard Lyman Bushman’s *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York, Vintage Books: 2005), 222-30.

[28] R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1986), 32-36.

[29] Orson Pratt, “Journal,” July 21, 1847 as quoted in *Millennial Star* v. 12, 178.

[30] Wilford Woodruff, “Journal” manuscript, July 21, 1847, Brigham Young University Archives.

[31] George A. Smith, “Liberty and Persecution—Conduct of the U.S. Government, etc.,” July 24, 1852, *Journal of Discourses of Brigham Young, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards and S. W. Richards, 1854-1886), 1:44.

[32] Orson Pratt, “Journal,” in *Millennial Star* v. 12, 178 and Thomas Bullock, “Journal” manuscript, July 22, 1847, Utah State Historical Society Archives. Both accounts found in R. H. Jackson, “The Mormon Experience: The Plains as Sinai, the Great Salt Lake as the Dead Sea, and the Great Basin as Desert-Cum-Promised Land.” *Journal of Historical Geography* 18, no. 1 (1992): 47.

[33] James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 257.

[34] William Clayton, *William Clayton’s Journal: A Daily Record of the Journey of the Company of “Mormon” Pioneers from Nauvoo, Illinois, to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake*. July 22, 1847. (Salt Lake City, UT: The Deseret News, 1921). Accessed online on July 29, 2014 at http://archive.org/stream/williamclaytonsj00clay/; James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 257.

[35] “Oration by Dr. Willard Richards at a Celebration of the 24th of July, 1850, in Great Salt Lake Valley,” *Millennial Star* 12, 22 (November 15, 1850), 342.

[36] Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah: Comprising Preliminary Chapters on the Previous History of Her Founders Accounts of Early Spanish and American Explorations in the Rocky Mountain Region, the Advent of the Mormon Pioneers, the Establishment and Dissolution of the Provisional Government of the State of Deseret, and the Subsequent Creation and Development of the Territory* (Salt Lake City: G. Q. Cannon, 1892) 1: 324.

[37] R. H. Jackson, “The Mormon Experience: The Plains as Sinai, the Great Salt Lake as the Dead Sea, and the Great Basin as Desert-Cum-Promised Land.” *Journal of Historical Geography* 18, no. 1 (1992): 50.

[38] *Journal of Discourses* v. 2, 220, Sermon by Heber C. Kimball, September 17, 1854; R. H. Jackson, “The Mormon Experience: The Plains as Sinai, the Great Salt Lake as the Dead Sea, and the Great Basin as Desert-Cum-Promised Land.” *Journal of Historical Geography* 18, no. 1 (1992): 49.

[39] *Journal of Discourses*, v. 12 88-90, sermon by Orson Pratt, 1867; as quoted by R. H. Jackson, “The Mormon Experience: The Plains as Sinai, the Great Salt Lake as the Dead Sea, and the

Great Basin as Desert-Cum-Promised Land." *Journal of Historical Geography* 18, no. 1 (1992): 50.

[40] According to Thomas Bullock, the man called by Brigham Young to be the chief clerk for the vanguard company of pioneers going to the Salt Lake Valley and whose journal serves as the official record of this journey, upon descending into valley the pioneer company saddled up near a grove of cottonwood trees at a point near the present-day intersections of 3rd South and State Street in Salt Lake City, dispelling the notion of a virtually tree-less valley. See Will Bagley, ed., *The Pioneer Camp of the Saints: The 1846 and 1847 Mormon Trail Journals of Thomas Bullock* (Spokane: Arthur H. Clark, 1997).

[41] *Journal of Discourses*, v. 19 224, sermon by Wilford Woodruff, 1877; as quoted by R. H. Jackson, "The Mormon Experience: The Plains as Sinai, the Great Salt Lake as the Dead Sea, and the Great Basin as Desert-Cum-Promised Land." *Journal of Historical Geography* 18, no. 1 (1992): 50.

[42] *Millennial Star*, v. 24, 781; Letter from Mary Farmer, December 6, 1862; *Journal of Discourses*, v. 9, 66, Sermon by George A. Smith, 1861 [emphasis added].

[43] William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen, eds., *Among the Mormons: Historic Accounts by Contemporary Observers* (Lincoln, UP??, 1958), vi; as quoted in R. Laurence Moore's *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1986), 35.

[44] Luther P. Gerlach and Virginia H. Hine, *People, Power, and Change: Movements of Social Transformation* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1970), chap. 7.

[45] Thomas Garrow and Bruce A. Chadwick, "Native Americans." *Encyclopedia of Mormonism.* Jared Farmer, *On Zion's Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), ch.2.

[46] Richard L. Jensen, "Immigration and Emigration." *Encyclopedia of Mormonism.*

[47] Brigham Young, "The Constitution and Government of the United States—Rights and Policy of the Latter-Day Saints," February 18, 1855, *Journal of Discourses*, 2:177.

[48] Anne Farrar Hyde, *An American Vision: Far West Landscapes and National Cultu*re, 1820-1920 (New York: New York University Press, 1990), 24-27.

[49] Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: Economic History of the Latter-day Saints 1830-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), ch. 6.

[50] Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1956).

[51] Perry Miller, *Errand Into the Wilderness* (New York: Belknap Press, 1956); Richard V. Francaviglia, *Go East, Young Man: Imagining the American West as the Orient* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2011), 89. Francaviglia describes this process as the Orientalization of the West.

[52] Armand L. Mauss, *All Abraham's Children: Changing Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 166.

[53]For more on the use of the Old World in the construction of Mormon identity, see "The Construction of the Mormon People," *Journal of Mormon History* 32, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 38-49; Jeanne Kay and Craig J. Brown, "Mormon Beliefs about Land and Natural Resources, 1847-1877." *Journal of Historical Geography* 11, no. 3 (1985): 255-56.

[54] Phillip L. Barlow, "Towards a Mormon Sense of Time," *Journal of Mormon History* 33, no. 1 (2007): 24.

[55] Steven LeSueur, "The Community of Christ and the Search for a Usable Past," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 22 (2002): 9; as quoted in Richard V. Francaviglia, *Go East, Young Man: Imagining the American West as the Orient* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2011), 88.

[56] As quoted by R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1986), 34.

[57] Genesis 12:1.

[58] Doctrine and Covenants 133:29.

[59] Orson Hyde, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 2, April 6, 1853, 11; as found in Richard V. Francaviglia, *Go East, Young Man: Imagining the American West as the Orient* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2011), 94 [italics added].

[60] Alfred Lambourne, *Our Inland Sea: The Story of a Homestead* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909), 76.

[61] Many scholars have drawn upon the similarities between the waterways of Utah and Israel, including: Jared Farmer, *On Zion's Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 108-09; Richard V. Francaviglia, *Go East, Young Man: Imagining the American West as the Orient* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2011), ch. 3; Richard H. Jackson, "The Mormon Experience: The Plains as Sinai, the Great Salt Lake as the Dead Sea, and the Great Basin as a Desert-Cum-Promised Land," *Journal of Historical Geography* 19 (Jan. 1992): 41-58; Richard C. Poulsen, *The Landscape of the Mind: Cultural Transformation of the American West,* American University Studies, American Literature Series, Vol. 23 (New York: Peter Lang, 1992), 106-7.

[62] Richard V. Francaviglia, *Go East, Young Man: Imagining the American West as the Orient* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2011), 96.

[63] Jared Farmer, *On Zion's Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 108-09; Richard V. Francaviglia, *Go East, Young Man: Imagining the American West as the Orient* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2011), 118-19.

[64] Anne Farrar Hyde, *An American Vision: Far Western Landscape and National Culture, 1820-1920* (New York, 1990), 112.

[65] Hans Huth, *Nature and the American: Three Centuries of Changing Attitudes* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 30-53; Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 67-83; Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 29; Roy Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West* ( ), 31-72; David Lowenthal, "The Place of the Past in the American Landscape," in David Lowenthal and Martyn J. Bow, eds., *Geographies of the Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 89-117.

[66] "Completion of the Railroad-Contemplated Excursions," *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City), 10 March 1869, 1.

[67] Anne Farrar Hyde, *An American Vision: Far Western Landscape and National Culture, 1820-1920* (New York: New York University Press, 1990), 108.

[68] The *Utah Historical Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan Kent Powell, (Salt Lake City, 1994), 437, quotes census figures for Salt Lake's 1890 population as 44,843 and 1900 population as 53,531.

[69] John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 5-7.

[70] Hal Rothman, *Devil's Bargain: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1998), 12.

[71] See Hal Rothman, *Devil's Bargain: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1998), 10-13; Stephen Jett, "Culture and Tourism in the Navajo Country." *Journal of Cultural Geography* 11 (Fall/Winter 1990): 101; Earl Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western America* (New York, 1957), 38-42.

[72] For more on nineteenth-century manners regarding spectatorship, see John F. Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990), ch. 7.

[73] Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York, 1976), 110; al Rothman, *Devil's Bargain: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1998), 14.

[74] Thomas K. Hafen, "City of Saints, City of Sinners: The Development of Salt Lake City as a Tourist Attraction, 1869-1900." *The Western Historical Quarterly* 28, 3 (Autumn, 1997): 345.

[75] Mark Twain, *Roughing It* (New York City: Hippocrene Books, 1872), 108.

[76] Richard V. Francaviglia, *Go East, Young Man: Imagining the American West as the Orient* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2011), 90.

[77] Journal of Discourses 1: 84

[78] M. Guy Bishop and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, "The 'St. Peter's of the New World': The Salt Lake Temple, Tourism, and a New Image for Utah." *Utah Historical Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (Spring 1993): 138.

[79] Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 240.

[80] Thomas K. Hafen, "City of Saints, City of Sinners: The Development of Salt Lake City as a Tourist Attraction, 1869-1900." *The Western Historical Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (Autumn, 1997): 368.

[81] Earl Pomeroy, *In Search of the Golden West: Tourism in Western America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 15. Despite the absence of a scholarly monograph exploring the literature of travel and tourism in the United States, a number of works have been published provide a selective overview of some of the literature and authors. See, for example, Warren James Belasco, *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910-1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1979); Dona L. Brown, *Inventing New England: regional Tourism in the Nineteenth* Century (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution press, 1995); John A. Jakle, *The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985); John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); and Craig G. Smith, "The Curious Meet the Mormons: Images from Travel Narratives, 1850s and 1860s." *Journal of Mormon History* 24, no. 3 (Fall 1998): 165-7.

[82] Howard Stansbury, *Exploration and Survey of the Valley of the Great Salt Lake of Utah, Including A Reconnaissance of a New Route Through the Rocky Mountains* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo and Company, 1852), 130.

[83] Jules Rémy and Julius Brenchley, *A Journey to Great-Salt-Lake City* (London: W. Jeffs, 1861), 196.

[84] William Hepworth Dixon, *New America* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott and Company, 1867), 139-140.

[85] Quoted in Dean C. Jessie, *Letters of Brigham Young to His Sons* (Salt Lake City, 1974), xxxviii-xxxix.

[86] Michael Hicks, *Mormonism and Music: A History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), ch. 9; Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 240; Reid Neilson, *Exhibiting Mormonism: The Latter-day Saints and the 1893 Chicago World's Fair* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), ch. 2.

[87] Boyd K. Packer, "The Candle of the Lord." *The Ensign* (January 1983); accessed online on November 24, 2014 at https://www.lds.org/ensign/1983/01/the-candle-of-the-lord?lang=eng

[88] Scott G. Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff's Journal* (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983), vol. 3, July 27, 1847.

[89] In their first general letter to the Saints, Mormon leaders ascribed "Great Salt Lake City, Great Basin" as the postmark location.

[90] Richard H. Jackson, "Great Salt Lake and Great Salt Lake City: American Curiosities." *Utah Historical Quarterly* 56, 3 (Spring 1988): 130.

[91] *Deseret News*, July 12, 1851.

[92] John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 176-7; Jared Farmer, *On Zion's Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 106. For more on America's spa tradition, see Johnathan Paul de Vierville, "American Healing Waters: A Chronology (1513-1946) and Historical Survey of American's Major Springs, Spas, and Health Resorts Including a Review of Their Medicinal Virtues, Therapeutic Methods, and Health Care Practices" (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1992); and Thomas A. Chambers, *Drinking the Waters: Creating an American Leisure Class at Nineteenth-Century Mineral Springs* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002).

[93] For example, when President James Buchanan appointed Alfred Cummings to replace Brigham Young as territorial governor, the Saints held a welcoming reception at the sulfur springs (perhaps the site was selected for its strong sulfuric smell and represented the Saints' impression of Buchanan and Cummings). Furthermore, when Speaker of the House Schuyler Colfax visited Salt Lake in 1875, he was treated to a special sulfur bath at the springs. See Jared Farmer, *On Zion's Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 106.

[94] Dale L. Morgan, *The Great Salt Lake* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1973), 351; and William Elkanah Waters, *Life Among the Mormons, And a March to Their Zion* (New York: Moorhead, Simpson and Bond, 1868), 100; as quoted in Nancy D. McCormick and John S. McCormick, *Saltair* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1985), 3.

[95] Nancy D. McCormick and John S. McCormick, *Saltair* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1985), 3.

[96] J. Valerie Fifer, *American Progress: The Growth of the Transport, Tourist, and Information Industries in the Nineteenth-Century West; Seen Through the Life and Times of George A. Crofutt, Pioneer and Publicist of the Transcontinental Age* (Chester, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 1988), 255-71; Nancy D. McCormick and John S. McCormick, *Saltair* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1985), 5-6.

[97] Dale L. Morgan, *The Great Salt Lake* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1973), 357.

[98] Nancy D. McCormick and John S. McCormick, *Saltair* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1985), 9-14. Despite the growth of tourism and amusement park-themed research over the last thirty years, the McCormick's book remains the only monograph-length work (only 109 pages) dedicated to the exploration of the Saltair Beach Resort.

[99] For a helpful discussion of rise of the "health rush" in Colorado and California during the 1870s, see J. Valerie Fifer, *American Progress: The Growth of the Transport, Tourist, and Information Industries in the Nineteenth-Century West; Seen Through the Life and Times of George A. Crofutt, Pioneer and Publicist of the Transcontinental Age* (Chester, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 1988), 255-71.

[100] P. Donan, *Utah—A Peep into a Mountain-walled Treasury of the Gods* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Matthews, Northup, 1891), 79.

[101] See Jared Farmer, *On Zion's Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 110. Farmer writes that around 100,000 paid admission to enter Garfield Beach in 1890.

[102] *Deseret News*, August 18, 1893.

[103] "For Saltair!," *Deseret News*, January 14, 1893, pg. 5

[104] MSS 1445 Box 13, Folder 1-2. "Saltair Beach Company: Articles of Incorporation," Salt Lake, Garfield & Western Railway Company Collection; 19th & 20th Century Western & Mormon Americana; L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University. On May 21, 1892, the Saltair Railway Company changed its name to the Salt Lake & Los Angeles Railway, indicative of the Church's plan to extend the railroad to California.

[105] Richard Francaviglia, *Go East, Young Man: Imagining the American West as the Orient* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2011), 122.

[106] Utah Postcards photograph collection, 1905-1999, PO591 Box 2 Folder 35. Special Collections and Archives. University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott. Salt Lake City, Utah.

[107] *Deseret News*, May 29, 1919 as quoted in Nancy D. McCormick and John S. McCormick, *Saltair* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1985), 30.

[108] "Saltair Exercise," *Deseret News*. June 9, 1893.

[109] "Our Great Advancement," *Deseret News*, June 17, 1893.

[110] Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 3-36; 180-211; Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: Economic History of the Latter-day Saints 1830-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 243-44; 384-85.

[111] See John Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1978), *37-56;* John F. Miller, "Roman Festivals," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 172; Scott Cross and John K. Walton, *The Playful Crowd: Pleasure Places in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 59-96.

[112] Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 261; Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: Economic History of the Latter-day Saints 1830-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 393.

[113] "Our Girls: Saltair," *Young Woman's Journal* 6, 9 (June 1895): 432.

[114] *Deseret News*, June 12, 1902.

[115] *Salt Lake Tribune*, August 31, 1895

[116] Saltair Beach Resort records, Accn 1025, Box 5. Special Collections and Archives. University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott. Salt Lake City, Utah.

[117] Roy Gibson papers, Accn 1132, Box 30, Folder 27. Special Collections and Archives. University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott. Salt Lake City, Utah.

[118] "Saltair—The Lady of the Lake Remembered." KUTV news, A0303. Special Collections and Archives. University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott. Salt Lake City, Utah.

[119] Roy Gibson papers, Accn 1132, Box 30, Folder 27. Special Collections and Archives. University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott. Salt Lake City, Utah.

[120] Wallace Stegner, "Xanadu by the Salt Flats—Memories of a Pleasure Dome." *American Heritage* 32, 4 (June/July 1981). Accessed online November 17, 2014 at http://www.americanheritage.com/content/xanadu-salt-flats

[121] D. Boyd Crawford, *History of Ogden: History in Old Post Cards* (Ogden, Utah: Crawford Publishing, 1991), v-vi.

[122] Jared Farmer, *On Zion's Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), ch.4.

[123] See David F. Boone "'A Man Raised Up': The Role of Willard W. Bean in the Acquisition of the Hill Cumorah." *Journal of the Book of Moron and Other Restoration Scripture* 13, no. 1-2 (2004).

[124] *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, vol.5 (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909), 85.

[125] In the Book of Ether, the Brother of Jared sees the finger of God while praying for guidance in the mountains. Nephi is taken in a vision to a "exceedingly high mountain" where he learns of God and Jesus Christ.

[126] Jared Farmer, *On Zion's Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 154.

[127] Alfred Lambourne, *Scenic Utah: Pen and Pencil* (New York: J. Dewing Publishing, 1891), iii.

[128] Jared Farmer, *On Zion's Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 154-8.

[129] For more on the Reed Smoot hearings, see Kathleen Flake, *The Politics of American Religious Identity: The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot, Mormon Apostle.* (Raleigh: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); M. P. Holsinger, "For God and the American Home: The Attempt to Unseat Senator Reed Smoot, 1903-1907," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* (1969); Michael Harold Paulos, ed., *The Mormon Church on Trial: Transcripts of the Reed Smoot Hearings* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2008); R. S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*: *A History*

[130] The Senate hearings lead to the resignation of two apostles, Matthias Cowley and John W. Taylor, who were both rumored to have performed plural marriages after the 1890 Manifesto. Furthermore, as evidence of good faith, in the April 1904 General Conference, President Joseph F. Smith reiterated the Church's position, which promised to excommunicate anyone who refused to relinquish the practice of plural marriage. For more on the Reed Smoot Trials and the continuing issues with polygamy, see Thomas Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), ch. 4; Kathleen Flake, *The Politics of American Religious Identity: The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot, Mormon Apostle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

[131] "Utah and Statehood," *New York Times*, March 12, 1904.

[132] Ibid.

[133] For a history of the See American First idea, see Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See American First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institute Press, 2001).

[134] Clipping, *Salt Lake Tribune*, n.d., as quoted in Marguerite S. Shaffer, "'See American First': Re-Envisioning Nation and Region through Western Tourism." *Pacific Historical Review* 65, no. 4 (November 1996): 565-6.

[135] Marguerite S. Shaffer, "'See American First': Re-Envisioning Nation and Region through Western Tourism." *Pacific Historical Review* 65, no. 4 (November 1996): 571-2.

[136] Thomas G. Alexander, "Senator Reed Smoot and the Western Land Policy, 1905-1920," *Arizona and the West* 13 (1971), 253.

[137] For more on Smoot's role in the establishment of the National Park Service, see Horace M. Albright as told to Robert Cahn, *The Birth of the National Park Service: The Founding Years, 1913-33* (Salt Lake City: Howe Brothers, 1985), 34–43.

[138] For more on Reed Smoot's efforts to establish a National Park at Zion's, see Thomas G. Alexander, "Red Rock and Gray Stone: Senator Reed Smoot, the Establishment of Zion and Bryce Canyon National Parks, and the Rebuilding of Downton Washington D.C.," *Pacific Historical Review* 72, no. 1 (February 2003), 7-20.

[139] Matthew Baker, "Selling a State to the Nation: Boosterism and Utah's First National Park." *Journalism History* 36, no. 3 (Fall 2010): 171.

CHAPTER 5

THE AMERICANIZATION OF THE IMAGE OF BRIGHAM YOUNG FROM MORMON PROPHET TO AMERICAN COLONIZER

On Friday, August 23, 1940, Salt Lake City hosted the world premiere of Darryl F. Zanuck's film, *Brigham Young*: the first positive non-partisan film about Young and the Mormon heritage. The city was expectedly bustling with energy as locals prepped to receive Hollywood and transform Salt Lake City into what the *Salt Lake Tribune*'s headline called, the "Glittering Capital of [the] Film World."[1] Utah Governor Henry Blood and Salt Lake City Mayor Ab Jenkins declared August 23rd "Brigham Young Day" and shops, schools, and businesses closed, enabling Utahans to flock to the city to participate in the festivities. Downtown Salt Lake City was packed with spectators; according to estimates, the city's population of 150,000 swelled to over 250,000. [2] Photographs show streets lined with pedestrians. Businesses took part by decorating their window-fronts with pioneer-themed displays. Over 100,000 spectators lined the parade route of Main and State Streets for a chance to catch a glimpse of the film's stars: Tyrone Power, Linda Darnell, Dean Jagger, Mary Astor, and Cesar Romero. Due to the high demand for tickets, Twentieth Century Fox executives permitted seven local theatres to premiere the film simultaneously. In all, every one of the nearly 9,000 available tickets were sold, thus marking the world premiere of *Brigham Young* the largest in Hollywood history to that date.[3]

Figure 5-1. A crowd gathers at the Salt Lake City airport to catch a glimpse of the stars arriving for the premiere of "Brigham Young" in 1940. (Utah State Historical Society)

Any trepidation Mormons felt about seeing Hollywood's portrayal of the Church's second president was assuaged when then Church President Heber J. Grant expressed his approval of the film after an advanced screening. When reporters asked for his impression, he told them, "I endorse it with all my heart and have no suggestions. This is one of the greatest days of my life."[4] While Grant admitted in a General Conference address to the Church later that year that "there are many things that are not strictly correct" in the film, he delighted in the positive publicity and the favorable depiction of Brigham Young.[5] Instead of focusing on the unsavory yet entertaining details about Young's life (such as his 56 wives or his alleged role in the Mountain Meadows Massacre[6]), the film's director offered the audience a more heroic portrait of Young as a courageous yet very much human leader beset with feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt who

overcame all obstacles in route to becoming, as the film's scriptwriter, Louis Bromfield, called "one of the six or seven greatest men America ever produced. He should have been President of this nation."[7]

The release of *Brigham Young* came during a time of domestic and international strife when Americans looked to Hollywood and the big screen for momentary escape. America in 1940 was still trying to dig out from the economically devastating effects of the Great Depression while contemplating responses to Nazi Germany's 1939 invasion of Poland and subsequent declaration of war on France and the United Kingdom. During the late-1930s and early-1940s, Hollywood produced many films extolling the characteristics of American heroes from the past. John Ford directed Henry Fonda in *Young Mr. Lincoln* in 1939, a film that celebrates the early life of the president. In 1940, Raymond Massey starred in the title role of *Abe Lincoln in Illinois,* and Mickey Rooney played *Young Tom Edison*, exploring the boyhood the American inventor. In 1941, Howard Hawks released *Sergeant York* staring Gary Cooper as World War I military hero, Alvin C. York. These films reiterated elements of America's mythos, reassuring viewers of the promise of America's way of life. And in 1940, Brigham Young became one of these heroic figures.

The morning of the premiere, the *Deseret News* and *Salt Lake Tribune* ran special advertisements from local and national businesses each paying tribute to Brigham Young. The ads generally featured an image of Young and an accompanying statement about his place in history and his connections, both real and imagined, with the company. For example, the Royal Baking Company described Young as occupying "a prominent place in history's gallery of great leaders" and "as one of the world's great colonizers." The Paris Company expressed their "sincere appreciation" for Young's example as a "leader, colonizer, man of vision . . . to whose far-sightedness and dauntless courage an empire owes its being, a great people its community ideals and progress; in whose life story is inspiration for millions who revere his memory, and

other millions who will thrill to him now." William Jeffers, President of the Union Pacific Railroad, paid tribute to the "genius of Brigham Young," for the "integrity so splendidly exemplified by [this] great pioneer leader," and for the "qualities of courageous leadership that have won the admiration of the world." Through the film, Jeffers wrote, "Millions of people in the United States will have an opportunity to learn of [his] outstanding achievements."[8] Such praise and admiration filled the pages of Salt Lake's daily newspapers on August 23, 1940, and contradicted the popular opinion of Brigham Young that circulated across the United States during his life and upon his death in 1877, perhaps summarized best in the concluding line of the obituary prepared for the *Chicago Daily Tribune*: "The memory of Brigham Young will exist there [in Utah] only as a tradition. It will be said of him perhaps in future generations that he was more fortunate in his death than in his life."[9]

As the discrepancies between the public depictions of Brigham Young in the 1870s and 1940s demonstrate, America's collective historical memory is in a state of constant flux. Americans frequently rethink the past by gathering, re-gathering, interpreting, and reinterpreting the facts. Then, we provide new or rearranged perspectives to explain how and why events occurred. These perspectives are shaped and dictated by current biases and the peoples' ongoing need to revise and correct the inadequacies of earlier generations' frameworks. As historian Frederick Jackson Turner observed, "Each age writes the history of the past anew with reference to the conditions uppermost in its own time."[10]

In the numerous biographies published in the first decades of the twentieth century, historians of the so-called frontier school of American history (steeped in the belief that the source of American exceptionalism was found in the open space of the frontier) elevated Young's significance in the formation and success of Mormonism and of the nation until he—and not his friend and predecessor Joseph Smith—was regarded as the true "genius of Mormonism."[11]

Young was repeatedly praised in these accounts for his strength of character, individuality, practicality, and virtue, yet the true locus of his success hinged, argued these historians, upon his location on the American frontier. He was even hailed as a man "who preeminently and distinctly embod[ied] all that is most American in the American character," a radical retreat from the label of "monster" he received at the time of his death.[12] But to accept either image of Young as accurate is naïve in that such an understanding ignores the role and agenda of the Americans who conceived these images. So if our memory of Brigham Young is merely a projection of different generations' own images, who was and *is* Brigham Young? How was he regarded by his contemporaries? How should we regard him? Is he an invention? An exaggeration? And who is responsible for the manipulation of Young's image and how is our collective historical memory of him affected by different portrayals? What aspects of his life are selected for the purpose of manipulating the public and what aspects are ignored or forgotten? And most importantly, why? What does this tell us about American culture and the place of Mormonism therein?

Within this dissertation, I have demonstrated how Mormons, seeking greater acceptance within the American religious, cultural, and political mainstream, rescripted the image of Mormonism between 1890 and 1930 to neatly align with popular notions about the transformative powers and the significance of the American West. The West, it was long believed, bore the seeds of America's character and exceptionalism; to be associated with the West was to be quintessentially American. Recognizing the power embedded within the popular mythic Western narrative and the associated rhetoric, symbols, images, icons, landscapes, and characters of the West, Mormons promoted aspects of their doctrine, cultural beliefs, and history that best overlapped with these Western characteristics, aspects they knew would resonate with outsiders and open doors of opportunity previously kept locked. Instead of emphasizing their differences, an approach that had resulted in alienation, persecution, and discrimination in the past, Mormons emphasized their similarities within the framework established by the Western narrative.

Sometimes, as has been demonstrated in previous chapters, this adaptation required Mormons to rewrite or refashion their history, their religious practices and beliefs, and the lives of their leaders to fit within the accepted standards set forth by the American mainstream. In short, Mormons deliberately designed their past for use in the present in order to ensure a better future. I contend that this was the case with the memory of Brigham Young as well.

Leading scholars of Mormonism today credit frontier school historians with popularizing Brigham Young for non-Mormon American consumption through their filiopietistic biographies that personified Young as the embodiment of America's sense of itself.[13] This assessment is inline with the observations made by American studies scholar John Bodnar in *Remaking America*, who accredited national memory to the "programmers" of the dominant culture (Protestant middle-class businessmen of the nineteenth century; professionals, editors, and government officials of the twentieth). For Bodnar, national memory is constructed through an ongoing and skewed battle between "official memory" (state-sponsored commemorations of national events) and "vernacular memory" (the ethnic, local, or regional communities' recollections of subnational events). Because the "official memory" narrative has the backing of the dominant class, its "programmers" have the resources to impose its (the dominant culture's) values on the rest of society as it seeks to preserve the institutions in which it has a personal stake.[14] By applying Bodnar's theory of the construction of memory to the cause of Brigham Young, we would assume that Young's 1940 popularity occurred *only* because "programmers" of the dominant class were able to frame Young's regional accomplishments within terms acceptable to the national mainstream and not because of the efforts of Mormon vernacular memory. However, when looking at the historical record, this assessment proves to be an oversimplification. This chapter complicates Bodnar's reading of the past and demonstrates how a religious and ethnic minority group, operating outside of the boundaries of the American mainstream in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was able to accelerate

accommodation by promoting their vernacular memory within the same framework and using the same language and values as the state-sponsored “official memories.”

Furthermore, this chapter shows that in an era when Blacks, Latinos, Eastern Europeans, Orientals, Native Americans, and Jews continued to find many avenues to American cultural citizenship closed or at best partially opened to them, Americans’ willingness to be open to the memory of Brigham Young, who had previously been ostracized and labeled an outsider, a criminal, and un-American, suggests that, at least in the case of Mormons, the doors of citizenship had opened at least a crack. Open a crack, that is, as long as they could offer something that the American public desired. In this case, that was a heroic personification of what Patricia Nelson Limerick would call the national “legacy of conquest.”[15] Simply crediting this chain of events to American historians and the popularity of American exceptionalism as evidenced in the rhetoric of the frontier that dominated early twentieth century American intellectual history as some historians have done in the past, downplays the efforts of minority groups like Mormons to proactively implement strategies in order to assimilate into the American mainstream.

In the years between Brigham Young’s death in 1877 and the premiere of Darryl F. Zanuck’s film *Brigham Young* in 1940, Mormons engaged in a subtle decades-long campaign to counter the unflattering – to Mormons, vile and slanderous – portrayals by which Young had been characterized during his lifetime. The goal was to rebrand him into a Western and, by extension, an American icon and hero. This was not as great a reach as it might have seemed, since, whatever else he was, Young was certainly a western pioneer. As sociologist Barry Schwartz demonstrated with Abraham Lincoln, great men and women become great, not just by their life’s contributions, but by how they survive in the memories and narratives of those that continue after them. Lincoln was despised during the last years of his life by the South, by discontented members of his party, and even by some in his cabinet. Nevertheless, in the years following his

death, the image of Lincoln as the National Liberator emerged as the dominant narrative of his life within American culture.[16] Even southerners came to mourn him, recognizing that he offered their best opportunity to avoid the recriminatory outlook of the Radical Republicans. Similarly, Mormon authors, more than their non-Mormon counterparts, were responsible for establishing the terms and the narrative by which non-Mormons would find it acceptable to embrace the figure of Young and view him and his accomplishments through an American lens. After his death, Mormons transformed "Brigham Young the Mormon Prophet," an image inundated with anti-American practices and beliefs (theocracy and polygamy, to name two), into "Brigham Young the American Colonizer," an image in line with the heroic American tradition of Westward expansion.

As this chapter demonstrates, the rescription of Brigham Young began within months of his death in 1877 as the Church intermixed folklore and history to establish and then reiterate an official narrative of Young's life and accomplishments. Then, in the 1880s and 1890s, as the Western narrative grew in popularity in the American mainstream, Mormons began publishing accounts praising Young as a colonizer and statesman with hopes that such images would gain traction in the American populace hungry for tales of Western heroism and conquest and serve as a bridge between Mormons and non-Mormons. Again, it is important to note that Young did have the credentials of a western settler hero. It is just that, to his coreligionists, those were not his primary qualities. To LDS members (many of whom were also pioneers), Young was a man of God, which is of course an even rarer credential. But that role's appeal would be largely lost on mainstream American culture, whereas the pioneer leader role could and did offer non-Mormons a perspective they valued. These accounts would gain traction, although it would take another fifteen years for this narrative to find a foothold with non-Mormon writers and in the popular imagination. And this is one of my major contentions: only *after* Mormons framed Brigham Young as the quintessential American western-icon did non-Mormon authors (including the

historians of the frontier school) begin publishing similar narratives that would forever change the trajectory of Young's place in the annals of American history.

Before beginning this chapter in earnest, a short word on methodology and sources is appropriate. Naturally, in charting a topic like public attitudes from the past, it is both necessary and challenging to establish how or what people thought. The scholar will make use of such interviews and surveys as exist, as well as personal writings like journals, diaries, or letters. Ideally, these will exist and be accessible. But that is not always the case, so a researcher must make use of other avenues of insight. Unfortunately, organizations like the Pew and the United States Census did not exist at the time in question or did not ask the types of questions that would be helpful for this study. Young and his people had other priorities besides maintaining an accessible paper trail to be of aid for future archival researchers. Therefore, I have chosen to examine historical, biographical, and popular periodical literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in which the respective authors provide a characterization of Brigham Young, especially when this characterization is prepared as a response to or to shape public perceptions of him. In the decades following his death, the topic of Mormonism remained of great interest to the nation. Many authors, intent on providing perspective on the religion, included historical overviews of the contributions made by leaders like Brigham Young. My intent here is to chart major trends in Brigham Young's characterizations and analyze how these characterizations evolved with time, even though many of these sources provided details that in themselves are episodic or partial. In order to compensate for the patchy nature of some of these sources, I have researched them in great quantity, in order to garner the most detailed panoramic view of the sources in aggregate. In all, I referenced over 65 different publications from Brigham Young's death in 1877 to the world premiere of *Brigham Young* in 1940. These publications represent the full gamut. Sources include manuscript-length biographies, journal articles, cartoons, and newspaper and magazine articles. Some of the sources were published locally or regionally or by

a religious press; others were published for wide-spread distributed in established centers for learning like New York City, Boston, and Chicago. The authors include men and women, Mormon and non-Mormon, Westerners and Easterners. Some of the authors knew Young intimately while others only learned of Young through the documents they read and the people they interviewed. A full chronological list of the sources may be helpful to others studying public attitudes about Brigham Young and Mormonism and may be found in Appendix A.

Representations of Brigham Young at His Death

On Thursday evening, August 23, 1877, Brigham Young fell ill with flu-like symptoms: body aches, vomiting and diarrhea. Seymour Young, Brigham's nephew and physician, attended to the Prophet and diagnosed his illness as "cholera morbus," a disease modern experts equate with thoracic ailments ranging from the "stomach flu" to appendicitis.[17] Despite the sustained efforts of the medical community and the repeated prayers and the performance of healing rites by Church members, Brigham Young died on August 29th. His daughter, Zina, who was present during most of his final days, later recounted the moments preceding her father's death. She wrote that after they moved Young to a bed near the window, he opened his eyes and "gazed upward, exclaiming: 'Joseph! Joseph! Joseph!' and the divine look in his face seemed to indicate that he was communicating with his beloved friend, Joseph Smith, the Prophet. This name was the last word he uttered."[18]

On September 1st, Young's body was transported from the Lion House to the Salt Lake City Tabernacle for a public viewing and funeral service. An estimated twenty-five thousand mourners filed through the tabernacle to pay their final respects. The obituary published within the Mormon-owned *Deseret News* mentioned evidence of Young's greatness everywhere: "The marks of his genius are stamped on the history and travels of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, on the city he loved so well, and on the towns, farms, orchards, canals highways, railroads, telegraphs, private and public buildings, and the thousand and one witnesses to his guiding hand and counseling voice over five-hundred miles of country redeemed from a desert."[19] He was described as a "great man," as "the large-souled leader, the wise counselor, the faithful friend of the good, the foe to evil, the inspired prophet, the great pioneer and colonizer, the loving husband and father, the indefatigable laborer for the salvation of the race!"[20]

Within these same obituaries was language indicating that Mormons understood that in life as in death, Brigham Young could be misunderstood and maligned by the public at large. "His greatness is universally acknowledged," attested one *Deseret Evening News* article, "but his goodness is known only to a few." Another article lamented that his "soul-winning qualities are known *but* to the people who have been gathered from all parts of the earth under his administration, and fully understood and appreciated *only* by those who were intimately acquainted with him."[21]

If these authors hoped that Young's death would end published character assassination, defamation, and humor at his expense, they woefully underestimated the rough taste of nineteenth century United States and the power of the sensationalist press.[22] Instead of dissipating the bad press, Young's death ignited a string of attacks in newspapers and illustrated weeklies that would continue through 1890. His universally recognizable caricature became a useful symbol of Mormonism and polygamy. As tensions between the United States and Mormonism mounted throughout the 1870s and 1880s, his likeness was repeatedly used by anti-Mormon artists and authors to further the anti-polygamy cause. In other words, Young became the shorthand trope for all that ailed the LDS – that is, in the eyes of other Americans. In their assessment of the media's treatment of Brigham Young upon his death, Mormon historians Gary Bunker and Davis Bitton concluded, "No American personality's death, before or since, has attracted media coverage quite like Brigham Young's. . . . [W]hat other American provoked by his death a reaction mainly of comic ridicule? And whose death was clung to so tenaciously by the press for several years after the event?"[23] While others deaths arguably attracted greater coverage than Brigham Young, such as the unexpected deaths of Presidents Abraham Lincoln or John F. Kennedy, and some celebrity's deaths have been met with comic ridicule, like Michael Jackson, the media's coverage of Brigham Young's death was unlike anything before or since.

Upon Young's demise, the media's first response was generally one of relief. For every article like the one published in the *Omaha Herald*, that found something praiseworthy in Young (he was "a terribly earnest and sincere man"), were many more dismissing him as a "man of mark" or a "spiritual Boss Tweed" or concluding that he "has no achievement worthy of note to perpetuate his pseudo-greatness." Col. J. T. L. Preston expressed his great pleasure in learning of Young's death, calling him a "fraud" and writing in *The Independent,* "We are thankful to Death for having hunted down this Erymanthian boar. No one can deny that Brigham Young was a powerful man. No one ought for a moment to consider him great."[24] Elsewhere in a carefully worded essay on the historical accomplishments of Mormonism's first two prophets published in *Catholic World,* John R. G. Hassard boiled Young's character down to "cold, calculating, avaricious, sensual, violent, cruel, rolling in luxury, stretching out his hands on every side to grasp the property of his dupes, and pushing them on from crime to crime, from horror to horror, that he might the better amass money." Comparing Young with his predecessor, Hassard further demonized Young, arguing that he would "take his place in history not only as a worse man that Joseph Smith, but as one of the most dangerous monsters ever let loose upon the world."[25]

After Young's death, many publications published sensationalized accounts of Young's family and their reactions to the loss of their husband, drawing upon the public's fascination with Young's multiple wives. These accounts often ridiculed Young and painted him as an oddity, sexual deviant, and outsider.[26] One of the most popular examples was Joseph Keppler's illustration entitled "In Memoriam Brigham Young," published in *Puck* magazine on September 5, 1877. The cartoon depicts twelve of Young's mourning wives situated side-by-side in an oversized bed, weeping into handkerchiefs as Young's spot in the center of the bed lays bare, his boots sit unmoved at the foot of the bed. This image, cleverly subtitled, "And the place which knew him once shall know him no more," exaggerated the public's imagining of Young's most

private and intimate moments. Others looked at Brigham Young with a mixture of jealousy and awe, wondering how one man could maintain marital harmony with so many spouses. Such thoughts piqued Mark Twain's curiosity until he visited Salt Lake City and, in pure Twain fashion, dismissed any pretense of jealousy when he label Mormon women as "poor, ungainly and pathetically 'homely' creatures." He went on, "The man that marries one of them has done an act of Christian charity which entitles him to the kindly applause of mankind, not their harsh censure—and the man that marries sixty of them has done a deed of open-handed generosity so sublime that the nations should stand uncovered in his presence and worship in silence."[27] Such was the sentiment of a poem in the San Francisco *Wasp,* published a month after Young's death, that described the moment when Brigham Young approached Saint Peter at the gate of heaven: "Who's there?" asked Pete/ "Only Brigham Young"/ Said the man with a humble grin./ "Nineteen wives," mused Pete,/ "Well, you've had your hell./ I guess we may let you in!"[28]

Figure 5-2. Joseph Keppler's 1877 cartoon, "In Memoriam Brigham Young"

Within the Western corridor of the nation, many felt Brigham Young's leadership hindered the region's economic and moral development and were relieved to learn of his death. Some journalists as early as 1874 had concluded that, rather than trying to work with Young, his death would be the ideal solution to the region's problems.[29] The reasoning here was that Young was too polarizing a figure for Utah's smooth integration into the nation at large, and that his removal from the scene would open the way to a less fraught relationship between Mormons and the mainstream. Echoing these sentiments in the wake of Young's death, the *Times* of Tuscarora, Nevada noted, "The demise of Brigham Young has long been looked for." [30] The *Salt Lake Tribune*, whose editors harbored antagonistic opinions of Young and the Mormons, expressed its hope that now that the backbone of the Church had been removed, "the whole decaying structure will fall to pieces . . . [and] Utah will be Americanized and politically and socially redeemed."[31] Others echoed this sentiment, hoping that Young's death would trigger the downturn of Mormonism or, at least, clear the way for its improvement. *The Examiner,* a leading intellectual weekly paper founded by Leigh and John Hunt in 1808, concluded its assessment of Young's life by declaring, "But if [Young's] death be the cause of bringing any improvement into the dreary city . . . it is not to be regretted."[32] Rev. Dewitt Talmage, writing in the *New York Times*, even proposed speeding up the downfall of Mormonism when he suggested Young's death marked the ideal moment for the United States government to order a military strike of the Mormons, led by Civil War General Phillip Sheridan, to confiscate their "rich lands," and "teach all Utah that 40 wives is 39 too many."[33]

The *Maine Farmer* offered a different perspective, lamenting Young's death because it offered, in the author's view, an escape from the justice Young deserved and the public wanted. Here was the essence of the stereotype as Young the Outlaw. Entrenched within the Wasatch Mountains and uninfluenced by public opinion or national law, Young's stubborn insistence on

practicing and teaching the doctrine of plural marriage was viewed by the American public with disdain and abhorrence. Despite sustained efforts to hold him accountable, Young had repeatedly dodged punishment. Furthermore, many Americans believed Young had personally ordered the September 11, 1857 attack on an emigrant wagon train at Mountain Meadows in Southern Utah, wherein Mormon militiamen conspired against and massacred about 120 men, women, and children.[34] Young's involvement was substantiated by John D. Lee, the man ultimately convicted of the massacre, in a memoir he authored prior to his firing squad execution on March 23, 1877. In *Mormonism Unveiled; or the Life and Confessions of the Late Mormon Bishop,* published months before Young's death, Lee wrote of a conspiracy involving the Mormon leadership of which he had become the scapegoat.[35] These claims supported the widely held view that under the political and religious leadership of Young, Mormons were engaged in unlawful, un-American activities and harbored un-American beliefs. The *Maine Farmer* concluded that the "accumulation of evidence [against Young] was so overwhelming, pointing directly to him as the chief instigator of the terrible Mountain Meadows Massacre, and of other atrocious crimes, that he would ere long, have been indicted and tried, and unless he could succeed in corrupting the jury," again, another example of Young's supposed disregard for the democratic process and the legal system, "he would undoubtedly have been convicted."[36]

Other writers acknowledged Brigham Young's strength of character and success as a leader but looked for any excuse to dismiss his achievements by distancing these achievements from the acceptable standards set by the American mainstream or by labeling them as un-American. For example, an article in the September 9, 1877 edition of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* admitted that Young had established a powerful "State and a Church." However, as the article continued, these accomplishments were insignificant as that state, Utah, was primitive in nature and embodied outdated ideals fundamentally opposed to American democracy. Furthermore, the

author concluded, the state was built upon outdated model of government, one "abandoned by mankind ages since because they outgrew it." The church, too, was criticized for having been built, not upon faith, doctrine, and good words, but upon the inhumane "enslavement of men and the degradation of women."[37] Here again, plural marriage was not seen as one part of a complex cultural and religious story. Instead, because of its lurid appeal, it was presented time and again as the only determinative point about Mormonism that non-Mormons needed to know. This unseemly focus on the issue does not, of course, flatter the mainstream or the press, but it does jibe with the tenor of sensationalism and prurience which marked late nineteenth century American life. Concerned that readers might summarize the rise of Mormonism and its un-American beliefs and practices as a reflection of national values, Col. J. T. L. Preston distanced the nation from the church for, as he explained, in actuality most Mormons were not "American" by birth but foreign-born immigrants, and, therefore, their primitive belief-system must not be used as a gauge for America's true character. "It must be remembered," he wrote, "that of the 100,000 of [Mormonism's] professors much the largest portion are importations of low European peasantry." [38] Another article noted the rapidity of Mormonism's growth, but stopped short of praising Young for this success. Instead, the author dismissed Mormon converts as mere "ignorant" immigrants "of the lowest classes," men and women who, on account of their ethnicity and upbringings, were prime marks to be duped by Mormon missionaries.[39] And thus, through using nativist rhetoric in line with the theories of scientific racism that were growing in popularity among those contemplating the idea of a world marked by competitive races, these authors dismissed Young as being merely the great leader of a second-class people. As the *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported, again praising Young while simultaneously marginalizing him, "Among Sioux, he would surely have been a Chief. Among Mormons, he was chief. Perhaps, had he been born and bred with better advantages, he would have been a chief among the best of our people."[40]

Note how this backhanded praise insinuates Young was *not* American. He possessed the leadership skills ("a rude native power, a stratum of hard sense, and a pertinacity and tenacity, the result of a steadfast and determined will") to be the leader of the marginalized and barbaric (Sioux and Mormon). Perhaps, had his life experiences led him to Boston, New York City, or Washington D.C. and had he taken up a cause different than Mormonism, he could have been a leader among Americans.

Thus, in the immediate aftermath of Brigham Young's death and for many years thereafter, many commentators treated Young with the same level of contempt as they had during much of his life. His accomplishments were excused and his character dismissed as being, as one writer described, an affront to "every sentiment—religious, moral, social, political, and national—of the land he lived in."[41] Yet, as the West grew in significance and popularity and as popular literature increasingly situated its unique brand of heroic protagonist in the West, Mormons recognized in their disparaged leader the very building-blocks for his public salvation and celebrity. In short, Mormons saw in Brigham Young a readymade Western hero. Importantly, without an institutionalized directive or central statement of purpose, during the next twenty-five years, Mormons tried to get other Mormons and other Americans to see the same thing.

Rescripting the Prophet into a Western Icon

In *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century,* R. W. B. Lewis noted within American literature the emergence of an archetypal hero whom he labeled the "American Adam" after the biblical Adam who similarly inherited a new land and went about taming it. Lewis noted that within this individualized hero, lay the characteristics "which [D.H.] Lawrence identifies as the 'essential American soul' . . . an isolate, almost selfless, stoic, enduring man." Elsewhere, Lewis described the American Adam as one who is "emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and race; an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources."[42] In the American imagination of the late nineteenth century, the American Adam came to be perceived as a cowboy—or at least a character situated upon the American frontier—who was equipped with rugged individualism, a strong sense of self-reliance and courage; a man with moral certitude in the face of difficult ethical dilemmas, freedom from the potentially stifling criticisms of society, superhuman powers or skills, and an implacable drive.[43] Because of what Lewis called a "duality" of character, the American Adam was essentially homeless: too savage for civilization; too civilized for a life of savagery. He was the lawless lawman; he was the noble savage. And while he operated according to a code of conduct, his code did not adhere to the acceptable standards established by religion or society's laws. He was thus seen as an outsider, as someone who functioned apart from civilization and did not need others to fulfill his purposes. And yet, society recognized in him their only hope for salvation and/or safety. At the end of the nineteenth century, the American Adam was easily recognizable in the pages of dime novels and Westerns in the incarnations of men like Buffalo Bill or Wister's Virginian. Mormons saw the American Adam in their prophet, Brigham Young.

Young was, after all, an outsider, fiercely independent, aloof and abrasive, self-reliant and self-propelling, and unconstrained by the laws of man and country. Unlike most American settlers, he did not head west to spread the boundaries of the United States, nor to bring the wilderness into the American fold. Quite the contrary. In fact, his goal was antithetical – to carve out a portion of the West that would be exempt from Manifest Destiny, within which his own religious and social cohort could enact its own destiny. At the mythic level, this was heresy for many Americans. If the mainstream was willing to see the traditional lands and ways of proud, longstanding native nations subsumed under the American tide, how much less would they hesitate to condemn out of hand the prospect of a Mormon carve-out in the middle of the continent? For his boldness personality, strength, and tenacity, he was dubbed the "Lion of the Lord," but only by those who loved him. As with every religious prophet, those outside his flock failed to reckon with his claim to divine sanction. During his life, he walked according to his own moral code, one dictated by the commandments of God as he understood them. He thus openly violated numerous anti-polygamy laws and rejected the constitutionality of the Morrill Act and territorial laws prohibiting adultery and lascivious cohabitation. To Young, this was inconsequential. He was not bound by those laws, but by the laws of providence. Furthermore, while Young was certainly not a gun-toting, shoot-em-up cowboy-type like other famed Mormon frontiersmen like "Wild Bill" Hickman or Porter Rockwell, he did not shy away from violence, especially when non-violence risked the harmony and security of his Mormon communities.[44] However, it is important to recognize that, within the Western experience, resorting to violence might under the right conditions be perceived as quintessentially American and therefore admirable. Context would determine which violence was positive and which was not.

While Young's dealings with regional Utah Indian tribes were generally peaceful (he spoke often of his belief that it was "better for us to feed the Indians . . . than it is to fight them"), Young's position buckled in times of war and he reluctantly admitted that in order for the

"Lamanites" (a *Book of Mormon* reference to an ancient people that Mormons believed were the ancestors of modern-day Indians) to be saved, many "will have to be slain, many of them by us." [45] In 1850, Young, speaking of a hostile band of Utes, told Utah Valley leader Isaac Higbee, "I say go and kill them," a proclamation that resulted in numerous skirmishes and the Mormon conquest of Utah Valley.[46] Young was also known to support unconventional practices—surveillance, intimidation, and threats of violence—in order to maintain order and security within his community. It was these practices which hostile commentators seized upon and exaggerated, much to the delight of their many readers. Those readers were unlikely to come away with a nuanced understanding of the Mormon experience at large, or of Young in particular.

In Nauvoo in 1845, for example, Young supported the actions of "whistling companies"—groups of young men that would spy on non-Mormon visitors and follow them around town, intimidating them with sticks and knives and whistling at them until they left town.[47] Effective as these methods might have been, they were unlikely to win the community much fondness when recounted to non-Mormons. Young was also known to support the doctrine of "blood atonement" or the idea that grievous sins would not be absolved by the Savior's sacrifice but required the voluntary shedding of the perpetrators' blood. While not an official doctrine or practice of the Church, Young often used the doctrine of blood atonement as a threat to dissuade would-be criminals from hurting the innocent or engaging in unlawful practices. Upon learning that several young men had behaved inappropriately toward some young women at Winter Quarters, Young ordered the men to be flogged. At a council meeting, Young literally called for the head of Ira West, a young thief and swindler: "I want his head cut off right before this people."[48] Here again, the subtle touch was not his forte. Young was also keenly intelligent and experienced in handling life, yet without a formal education. Young often proudly remarked that he had only eleven days of formal schooling; "instead of going to school," he reminisced, "I

had to chop logs, to sow and plant."[49] Here again, lack of proper schooling could be presented either as an embarrassment or as evidence of hurdles overcome by innate wisdom and hard work. It depended on the overall context. So long as Young was described in negative terms, his lack of schooling might be used to denigrate his record. But if the narrative turned in positive directions, he could be portrayed as a self-schooled son of the West. In short, Young personified many of the characteristics celebrated in the Western hero of American popular culture that Lewis would isolate as emblematic of the mythical American Adam and historian Seymour Martin Lipset would label as the very characteristics of America's conception of itself.[50] Unfortunately, during his life and even after his life, most Americans would not see Young through such a lens.

Despite his life experiences, as previously discussed, most Americans' knowledge of Young came not from personal contact but was shaped through the reporting of the media. Working years before R. W. B. Lewis but like him recognizing the archetypal character imbedded within popular culture, members of the Mormon community borrowed rhetorical devices and themes from the literature of the American mainstream to situate Young and their cause within the context of American civilization. They believed that if they could successfully promote Brigham Young as the embodiment of the very heroic characteristics Americans celebrated in fiction AND if this image could gain traction among the public, then perhaps their path towards mainstream acceptance and respectability would be eased. After Young's death, Mormons engaged in a decades-long process of rescription, highlighting those aspects of Young's life that best exemplified the characteristics of the Western hero and downplaying or ignoring those aspects that did not fit. This is not to say that Mormons were guilty of inventing or manufacturing events from Young's life as much as they were selective in choosing those events and characteristics that best fit the heroic mold. Through this process, Mormons played a central role in determining how Young would be taught and remembered, publishing character descriptions of

Young that would transform him from a Mormon prophet into a heroic, Western, and, most importantly, an American icon.

For this rescription to take hold, Mormons first sought to locate Brigham Young and Mormonism within the context of American civilization and history. Americans needed to know that Brigham Young was more than the Mormon prophet or the polygamist. He was also and more importantly as far as the mainstream should care, an American hero. Americans needed to believe that Young operated with the knowledge that the decisions he made while functioning as the Mormon leader where made with his eye single to the betterment of the nation and not for personal gain or to cement his position of authority over Mormonism. To accomplish this, Mormons framed Brigham Young as an American colonizer and statesman, providing non-Mormon readers an alternative lens through which to interpret Young's actions as contributions to America's development.[51]

In describing Young, many Mormon authors who knew Brigham Young personally chronicled his accomplishments by focusing on those characteristics that would make Young an attractive hero-figure for Americans who had previously established frontiersman like Davy Crockett and Daniel Boone, military leaders like George Washington and Andrew Jackson, and statesman like Benjamin Franklin as heroes. He was, according to Mormon apostle Moses Thatcher, a great "colonizer, statesman, philosopher, philanthropist, reformer."[52] Edward Anderson described him as a "deliverer, leader, law-giver, diplomat, colonizer, [and] statesman."[53] Church historian Andrew Jenson labeled Young "a Prophet, statesman, pioneer, and colonizer." Attributing a quote to William H. Seward, Secretary of State under Abraham Lincoln and a credible, non-Mormon, unbiased, national figure, Jenson wrote, "America had never produced a greater statesman than Brigham Young," again, emphasizing Young significance beyond his role as a religious leader.[54] Writing in 1896 in the *Overland Monthly,* Edward Steptoe,

a sympathetic non-Mormon with long ties to Brigham Young, provided readers with a first-hard account of Brigham Young's arrest for polygamy. Instead of using the article to humiliate the prophet, Steptoe flipped the narrative making Young as trickster character who, despite the momentary setback, is able to come out on top. In this account, Steptoe describes the moment in 1863 when then-Colonel Patrick E. Connor and his troops from Fort Douglas, issued an arrest warrant for Brigham Young and began marching to Salt Lake City to subdue him. Learning of the warrant, the Mormon militia took to the streets to counter the army and prevent the arrest. Recognizing the severity of the moment, the potential for a military clash, and the unlikeliness that he would receive a fair trial by the federally appointed judge if he were arrested by his nemesis, Connor, Young instead offered himself up to a local judge, was arrested, and immediately posted bond. His arrest nullified Connor's warrant, disarmed tensions, and enabled Young to be tried by the courts by his terms. Such quick thinking, thought Steptoe, especially for a man with such a limited education, is indicative of a great man.[55]

This 'rebranding' of Young, while no doubt canny and good for the LDS cause, was not simply cynical, nor was it false or ridiculous. It was, as alluded to above, largely a matter of which context to emphasize. Young was, in fact, quite reasonably portrayed in those more positive terms. He was a pioneer. He was an effective leader. He was brave, intelligent, and self-actualized. All of these traits, so much a part of the hero's makeup, were documentable in Young's overall character and life. The key was moving perceptions beyond Young-the-polygamist, or Young-the-outsider, so that Americans who were not Mormon could appreciate those parts of his makeup which they admired in other heroes and should thus like in his case.

According to Orson F. Whitney's *History of Utah*, Brigham Young was not only a "Moses," who led his people into the wilderness, but a "Joshua who established them in a promised land." He was, Whitney wrote, the "beating heart, the thinking brain, the directing hand in all the wondrous work of Utah's development, and to a great extent the development of the

surrounding States and Territories." He was responsible for forming "a nucleus for western civilization" in the West, for the "colonization" of the Great Basin, and for the development of "Idaho, Montana, the Dakotas, Colorado, Wyoming, Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico." For his great vision and efforts to establish America, he "needs no monument of marble or bronze," though, Whitney would agree, he deserved it. Instead, "his record is imperishably written upon the minds and hearts of many tens of thousands to whom he was benefactor and friend. His name and fame are forever enshrined in the temple of history, in the Pantheon of memory, in the Westminster Abbey of the soul."[56] This is an excellent text to examine closely. Remember that Americans of the nineteenth century could be assumed to be biblically literate. They would know that Joshua was Moses' designated successor; that Joshua, not Moses, led the children of Israel into the Promised Land. As Moses lay buried on Mount Moriah, his people crossed the Jordan, won the battle of Jericho on the shores of the Dead Sea, and moved into the land of milk and honey. Americans loved this Exodus account, seeing in it parallels to their own experience as a chosen people in a fertile new land. How effectively, then, would the comparison of Young to Joshua help Americans to see Mormons not as aliens, but as part of a compelling saga to which the mainstream felt very attached!

Other Mormon writers tried to establish Young as an exemplary American colonizer by comparing him to the greatest men of the past: generals, politicians, and conquerors. These authors avoided hyperbole while describing a man who, like the Western hero, seemed larger-than-life, too good to be true, and equipped with superhuman powers and skills. For example, essayist, playwright, and historian Edward W. Tullidge likened Brigham Young to English military and political leader Oliver Cromwell, who styled himself a Puritan Moses.[57] In an 1889 article published in the Mormon-run *Contributor,* Mormon apostle Moses Thatcher compared Young to the heroes of Western civilization: Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant, Oliver Cromwell, Napoleon, Caesar, and Alexander. He concluded that though "others conquered on the field of

carnage Brigham Young conquered in the field of justice and reason" and thus deserves a place among the "highest our great country has produced." Thatcher likened Young's greatness to that of Mount Papocatapetl, that as a man standing at its base would look gaze upward at its greatness in "an overpowering sense of awe," so too would someone feel as they looked at Brigham Young. "A mole hill fills not the space occupied by a mountain," he wrote, "neither the mind of an ordinary man the space filled by the mighty, almost boundless intellect and spiritual force of that great colonizer, statesman, reformer and prophet leader." "The scope of his mind seemed limitless," he professed. Thatcher wrote that Young "could speak the language of the stars, discourse eloquently respecting the organization of worlds," yet he was not so far removed from reality that he could not direct others on "how to plow and plant, reap and sow" or care for their temporal welfare. [58] Here, Young's violent career was refashioned into an exemplary martial context, in comparison with generals whom the public admired. Already, the animosity felt towards Lee and the Confederacy had given way to admiration for the Marble Man and the Lost Cause. If the South could be reimagined, not as a rebellious land of slavers, but as a chivalric place of military virtues, then surely the Mormons and their leader could be reimagined, too. After all, despite the violence wrapped up in the Nauvoo-to-Utah experience, the Mormons did not have to live down secession and a massive civil war.

To establish Young as an American colonizer, some Mormons felt it was necessary to first establish Young as an American, a heritage many questioned on account of what they perceived to be his anti-American rhetoric and practices. In a tract published and distributed in Tennessee while serving a mission in the southern United States, Matthias Cowley, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, emphasized Young's American roots to any who would question his origins. Young was, wrote Cowley, "of purely American stock, dating back many generations." And if his family lines were not enough to prove his Americanness, Cowley wrote of Young's family as one dedicated to the values of America's foundation: "his family relations

on both sides were among the staunchest supporters of freedom in the American colonies."[59] Similarly, Orson F. Whitney, who would years later fill the seat on the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles vacated by Cowley, described Young as a "native American, a descendent of the pilgrims and patriots."[60] Susa Young Gates, Young's daughter and a frequent contributor to eastern magazines and journals, responded to lingering doubts about her father's American patriotism by penning an article in the *Juvenile Instructor* in which she too established Young's Americanness by describing his ancestry and dedication to American ideals: "Born of a Revolutionary war veteran, John Young, and a loyal Puritan family mother, Abigail Howe, what more and what less could he be? Who could doubt Brigham Young, whose birth, boyhood, and maturity was an embodied Declaration of American Independence." As a child, Gates recalled, Young would gather the boys of Mendon, New York together to mimic their favorite American heroes, Young "drilling them in platoons and leading them in cries of 'Hurrah for Andy Jackson,' as they marched through the village." For Gates, Young was a "patriot first."[61] Edward H. Anderson, another Mormon author and writer for the *Improvement Era*, described Young as a one of the "great historical characters of our country." Likening Young to heroic Americans like George Washington or General Ulysses S. Grant, Anderson noted that Young was born in the United States and his actions were "as distinctively American as are those of any other hero who has ever aided in the furtherance of our national prosperity, from the father of his country to the saviors of the Union."[62] Here, Young could take his place alongside those whose claim to fame and honors included taming wild lands and bringing them into American control.

Mormon authors also rescripted Young's *actions* as American. Take, for example, Young's role in the settlement and development of the West as seen through his decision to establish Zion in the Salt Lake Valley. Although Young himself wrote that he was acting as a prophet when he made the decision to establish a community for the building up of God's

kingdom and the gathering of the elect, Mormons, writing after Young's death, emphasized this decision was made for the purpose of expanding American democracy and pushing America's geographic boundaries westward—making Young's actions appear more in-line with other Anglo-American colony builders like George Calvert, founded of Maryland; William Penn, founded of Pennsylvania; James Olgethorpe, founded of Florida; or Stephen F. Austin, founded of Texas. Edward Tullidge, a man who penned biographies of both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, described Young, like many others, as the "Mormon Moses." Tullidge stressed however, that Young earned this title for more than having lead a religious exodus. Young was called "Moses" for constructing a "new civilization" and for being the man that "pioneered America westward." Scipio A. Kenner, a Mormon editor and politician in Salt Lake City, framed the Mormon westward migration experience in language that suggested it was undertaken in a spirit of conquest, empire-building, or expansion. Kenner attributed the Mormon migration not to divine inspiration or revelation but to the "STAR OF EMPIRE" that settled upon Young and "hovered over him till his work was done." The "STAR OF EMPIRE" selected Young to lead man "to the promised land in safety" and there establish the framework wherein man's unalienable rights, "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," those very rights America's political experiment sought to protect, "shall find an abiding place forever more."[63] It is no accident that these accounts offer up a prototype for Young as a developer, Young as a community leader, Young as an entrepreneur who saw a blank space and built something grand. The admiration for that kind of enterprise was only increasing in the West, as boosters in places like Los Angeles sold a public on their wild visions of a great community to be built in a hostile place of scant abundance. Young, therefore, was perfect as a precursor to western community boosters.

The Mormon settlement story became an ideal target for rescription, as Mormon authors sought to establish a patriotic backdrop to Young's decision to settle in the Salt Lake Valley.

Mormons believed it was important that other Mormons and Americans understood that, even though the Mormon westward migration was instigated by American religious intolerance, the Mormon decision to settle came from a sense of nationalistic altruism. For example, in Brigham Young's obituary in the *Deseret Evening News*, the unlisted author described how Young entered the valley on the 24th of July after traveling hundreds of miles across the American Deseret and, like military leaders, explorers, and colonizers of the past, "unfurled the 'Stars and Stripes'" on foreign soil.[64] In this reimagining, the reader can visualize Young as a conquering, trailblazer, standing at the rooftop of the nation silhouetted across the darkening sky, waving the American flag back-and-forth to the cheers of his ragged crew of pioneers as he claims all the land he can see for the United States of America. While this image is certainly patriotic, historians both past and present have repeatedly challenged its historical accuracy, calling this vision a mere "reiteration of a persistent, local tradition." [65] However, regardless of its truth, the image gained traction after Young's death. In 1886, Andrew Jenson, then a part-time employee of the LDS Church but who would later rise to become the Assistant Church Historian to Joseph Fielding Smith, admittedly used this *Deseret Evening News* account as his foundation text to describe Young's arrival in the valley. In the short biography he wrote of Young for his book about Mormon's Apostles, Jenson described how Young "unfurled the 'stars and stripes' on Mexican soil."[66] The following year, Salt Lake photographer James H. Crockwell published a collection of photographs of Brigham Young and his wives. In his characterization of Young, he admittedly borrowed heavily from Jenson's 1886 historical biography of Young when he too described Young unfurling "the 'Stars and Stripes' on Mexican soil."[67] In 1904, Orson F. Whitney imagined the Mormon colonizers "flinging to the breeze the stars and stripes" as they claimed the country "which then belonged to Mexico, in the name of the United States." His patriotic account does not end here, but continues by describing how, after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, these

Mormon colonizers “organized, pending the action of Congress upon their petition for a State government, the Provisional State of Deseret, of which Brigham Young was elected Governor.” This tradition would continue to gain traction among Mormons during the early twentieth century, connecting Young with the ideas of American expansion and colonization and describing the Mormon migration and settlement within the framework of America’s Manifest Destiny. The cumulative effect of the repetition of this story was its solidification into fact, as when, between the years 1933 and 1935, artists Lee Greene Richards, Waldo Midgley, Gordon Cope, and Henry Rasmussen, commissioned by FDR’s Works Progress Administration, painted a mural in the Utah capitol dome depicting Brigham Young and other leaders placing an American flag on Ensign Peak.

This patriotic narrative was not the only way Mormons framed their settlement. As mentioned in Chapter 4, a few months after Young’s death and 30 years after the fact, Wilford Woodruff, Young’s friend and colleague, described the moment Young made the decision to settle in the Salt Lake Valley:

> When we came out of the cañon *[sic]* into full view of the valley, I turned the side of my carriage around, open to the west, and President Young arose from his bed and took a survey of the country. While gazing on the scene before us, he was enwrapped in vision for several minutes. He had seen the valley before in vision, and upon this occasion he saw the future glory of Zion and of Israel, as they would be, planted in the valleys of these mountains. When the vision had passed, he said: “It is enough. *This is the right place*. Drive on.”[68]

Woodruff’s description established the notion that the decision to settle Utah was made on account of a supernatural event. In the written accounts of Brigham Young and the settlement of Utah, the patriotic narrative would serve as the dominant narrative through the start of the twentieth century. In the following years, Wilford Woodruff would be this narrative’s primary purveyor. In 1880, Woodruff’s 1877 address “The Pioneers” would be published in the *Contributor*, publishing the oral tradition for the first time and dispensing throughout the Utah Territory.[69] After Woodruff became the Prophet and President of the Church, he used the podium

at General Conference to repeat his version of the settlement process and Young's role in it. In 1892, Woodruff stood before the congregation and professed that Mormons settlement and success in the valley was "in fulfillment of the revelations of God." He described how Brigham Young had turned to him after casting his eyes out over the valley and said, "Here is our home. This is the place God has pointed out for us to plant our feet. I have seen this before." He invited those in the congregation to "go where you please; go north, go south; go to any part of the country, and when you come back you will say: this is the place." [70] In 1893, Woodruff again recounted his entrance into the Salt Lake Valley with Brigham Young and described how Young was "wrapped in vision" and said, "Now drive down, this is the place for us to stop, I have seen this place before."[71] In 1897, Woodruff again repeated the story, this time Young says, after his vision, "That will do, drive on; this is the place. I have seen this valley before in vision."[72] Yet again, a western tale of vision preceding actuality – or, in reverse, of building and shaping a place to live up to the inspired vision – could be applied to Young and Utah.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Woodruff's tale found reiteration in official records of the Church's history. In 1901, Assistant Church Historian Andrew Jenson published an account of Brigham Young's arrival in the valley in *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia,* marking the first time a historian used the "this is the place" narrative as the "official" version of the past. Of Young's discovery of Utah, Jenson wrote, "President Young was sick and riding in the carriage of Apostle Wilford Woodruff, when his eyes rested upon the valley, he said, "This is the place." It was a barren desert, but God had shown him in vision the place to rest, and he knew the valley when he saw it with his natural eye."[73] Perhaps the best history of the Mormon Church was written by B. H. Roberts/ In 1909 Roberts was invited to pen the "story of Mormonism" in *Americana,* the monthly magazine published by the American Historical Society. When the series concluded in 1915, Roberts hoped to publish his extensive historical treatment of the church to

Mormon audiences. When, years later, the Church approved, Roberts revised his work, eventually submitting a 3,459-page, 189-chapter, six volume of work the served, as the name suggests, the *Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.* When discussing the settlement of Utah in volume 3, Roberts too would accept the Wilford Woodruff "This is the Place" account as historically accurate despite the lack of evidence, further solidifying the place of this account in the minds of Mormons.[74]

Thereafter, Woodruff's reiteration found a home in other church leaders who, like Woodruff, repeated this narrative in their speeches at the Church's semi-annual General Conference meetings. In 1907, Apostle Seymour B. Young explained that "When President Brigham Young entered the Salt Lake Valley in 1847, he rasied himself upon his elbow, in the carriage of Brother Woodruff . . . and said: "This will do; drive on, Brother Woodruff; this is the place for the gathering of the Saints." Apostle Young described his pronouncement as "prophetic."[75] In 1910, Orson F. Whitney described Young looking out over the valley in a "vision," when "a voice from above declared: 'This is the place where my people Israel shall pitch their tents.'"[76] When Samuel Brannan, who had established Cape Horn with a Mormon colony, tried to persuade Young to move the colony to the fertile grounds of California, Whitney said Brigham Young answered, "No; this is the place; here we will build the city and temple of our God." Even though other explores and mountaineers tried to discourage Young, he was sure "for he was guided by the inspiration of heaven." Seymour Young, in 1912, preaching about inspiration, described it as the "same inspiration" that prompted Brigham Young to say "This is the place." In 1913, Apostle Hugh J. Cannon also called Young "inspired" to say "This is the place." In 1915, Apostle J. Golden Kimball described how "when President Brigham Young came, with the pioneers, he was sick, and prostrated in the wagon in which he was riding, he rose and saw this valley, and said: 'This is the place: drive on!'"

Popularization of the New Mormon Image

In the wake of these successful and ongoing efforts to establish Brigham Young as an American hero, the Mormon Church during the 1890s made major political and doctrinal concessions which assuaged tensions between Mormons and the nation. The result was Utah earning statehood in 1896. With the right accommodations made, the nation's public attitude toward the Saints began to soften.[77] The caricatures of old, though occasionally still rearing their ugly head, particularly whenever the titillating plural marriage subject came up, were no longer as effective. In fact, as time wore on, resorting to that tired old stereotype became a reliable indicator of ignorance as to Mormon realities, since the Church laid aside the practice by dint of divine guidance. Simply put, LDS members were no longer engaging in the practice which ignoramuses thought they were. Mormons and Utah became more and more integrated into the United States. This softening is evidenced, for example, in popular culture, especially in dime novels and Westerns where Mormons continued to play prominent character roles. Within their publications, non-Mormon authors, taking a page from Mormon authors, offered their Mormon characters opportunities to break free from the stereotypes of the past. As Mormon characters acted and were represented through a less-marginalized framework, American audiences too could reread Mormons and Mormonism through new lenses. This reimagining of Mormonism helped paved the way for the wide-spread public acceptance of Brigham Young. Increasingly, while they kept their religious identity and fidelity to the teachings and practices of their Church, Mormons also shared in a wider array of American experiences. As citizens of a state, Utahans could expect to experience whatever their nation was going through: war, peace, depressions or prosperity. More and more, Mormons and their fellow Americans had shared experiences and points of reference, which of course drew them together.

The American public's changing attitude to Mormons is evident in the June 1897 installment of the dime novel series, Frank Merriwell, created by Gilbert Patten.[78] In *Frank Merriwell Among the Mormons, or the Lost Tribe of Israel*, Frank Merriwell, the all-American athlete from Yale, arrives in the "the lost valley of Bethsada," where a group of renegade Mormons have established a community "shut off from the rest of the world—a town of which few outside its boundaries know anything at all." Frank meets Elder Asaph Holdfast, the Mormon villain, whose strange name represents both his exoticism and marginalization (Asaph) and his inability to let-go of antiquated beliefs and practices (Holdfast). Holdfast immediately dismisses Frank's bicycle as one of "those inventions of Satan!" and is otherwise set at odds with the standards of America.

In his mission to save a young Mormon maiden from Holdfast, who had captured and decided to make her one of his polygamous wives, Frank meets another Mormon named Tom Whitcomb, the young girl's suitor and, as evidenced in his name and by his actions, a much more Americanized Mormon. After working closely with Whitcomb to rescue the young girl from Holdfast, Frank becomes convinced that Mormonism may not be as bad as he assumed:

> We have pledged ourselves to Tom Whitcomb, and we'll stand by him through thick and thin." Through thick and thin!" echoed Merriwell. "He seems to be a white man and all right, even if he is a Mormon." "Do you know, I am getting a different opinion of the Mormons than I once had." "How is that?" "Why, the Mormons I have seen seem like other people. I believe some of the wild stories told about their religion, and their ways are a mess of lies." The Mormons are not what they were, Jack. They have changed in recent years, and the younger Mormons are all right. They still hold to their religion, but they have cast aside polygamy, and I believe no man has a right to say how another shall worship God.[79]

While this publication made use of a familiar Mormon motif in the character of Holdfast, the author was willing to present a fresh image of Mormonism, free from the stereotypes of the past, and one that supported the idea that Mormons could be like other Americans. From this

story stemmed a soon-to-be prevailing narrative that presented old Mormons as "bad" and young Mormons as "good."

While Gilbert Patten's Frank Merriwell had no problem giving Mormons a second chance, other authors of the early twentieth century struggled over how the Mormons of the old West would be portrayed. A 1911 *Cosmopolitan* cartoon, for example, recycled a common nineteenth-century symbol of Mormonism, when it depicted the religion as a dark creature lurking in Salt Lake City with its dark tentacles stretched out across other Western states.[80] This cartoon spurred subsequent anti-Mormon rhetoric within other popular periodicals including *Cosmopolitan, McClure's, Pearson's,* and *Collier's* that likewise offered distorted perspectives on Mormon theology and practices in line with the outdated stereotypes of the past. Shocked by the ignorance and hate of these publications, many Americans stood up in defense of the Mormons. Theodore Roosevelt, himself an icon of Western masculinity, penned an open letter to *Collier's* in 1911 refuting the magazine's anti-Mormon claims and offering an alternative reading of the Western people. He wrote, "There is a peculiar infamy in this species of slander, and the men engaged in it do not stand one whit above any men who have really taken part in the practices which they affect to denounce."[81] Here, Roosevelt was offering a tangible example of western fair-mindedness. By the lights of his argument, to harbor prejudice against Mormons was unfair, unwestern, and hence un-American. He went on to refute antiquated Mormon stereotypes about sexuality and even linked Mormons to the propagation of the white race.

> [Mormon] young men were less apt than their neighbors to indulge in that course of vicious sexual dissipation so degrading to manhood and so brutal in the degradation it inflicted on women; and they were free from that vice, more destructive to civilization than any other can possibly be, the artificial restriction of families, the practice of sterile marriage; and which ultimately means destruction of the nation.[82]

Roosevelt's characterization of the Mormons reflects the Mormons' characterization of themselves, suggesting that Mormon efforts to rescript their past and their image were having at least some successes.

A great shift in the way popular culture portrayed Mormonism came from the work of American author Zane Grey, who published three novels in the early half of the twentieth century that located Mormonism on the frontier of the mythical Old West and cobbled together a new cultural understanding of Mormons for the books largely non-Mormon audience. As Western scholar William R Handley notes, "Grey's fiction not only 'steals back' the white identity Mormons already had but much of their religious and cultural identity as well."[83] In publishing *The Heritage of the Desert* (1910), *Riders of the Purple Sage* (1912), and its sequel, *The Rainbow Trail* (1915), as American studies scholar Jeremy Ricketts argues, Grey wove together the popular Mormon myths, truths, lies, and contemporary feelings to bring Mormonism into the twentieth century.[84] Grey was not above painting some Mormons with the old tar brush of secrecy or polygamy. But his Mormon characters were not all that way. Instead, as befits an author of some skill, his Mormon characters as well as his non-Mormon ones displayed a diversity of natures and behaviors. That in itself reveals the mainstreaming of Mormons from a dangerous cult of uniform practitioners into a more nuanced and realistic community. It is the way Grey characterizes his Mormon characters, both the good and the bad that, to me, is significant. Much as Mormons rescripted Brigham Young as a frontier hero, Grey portrayed Mormons in general with stereotypical characteristics common in the Western narrative which helped enable them to become a largely accepted part of the contemporary moment in America.

For example, Grey's *The Heritage of the Desert* explores the complicated relationship between Mormon August Naab and non-Mormon Jack Hare as a window into the soul of Mormonism. Harboring ill-feelings towards Naab largely due to misperceptions about his religious beliefs, Hare's experiences and evolving emotions demonstration that change and

transition were possible. Of Hare's feelings, the narrator notes, "In forty-eight hours he had learned to hate the Mormons unutterably; here, in the presence of this austere man, he felt that hatred wrenched from his heart."[85] For Naab was different than anyone Hare had met. He was an outsider, a polygamist, and a Mormon. Yet, there was something heroic and praiseworthy in the way Naab lived his life. Invoking the mythical narrative of the West, Grey describes Naab as the fastest draw in the region; he could unsheathe his weapon "quicker than the eye." Yet, because of his Christian beliefs, Naab disdained violence. He represented a class of men who lived the ethos of the frontier even though the frontier had closed. He was, as other American Adams, a "desert man . . . stripped of all the false fears of civilization."[86] But he was also a Mormon.

In *Riders of the Purple Sage*, considered by some as the "most popular western novel of all time," Grey tells the story of a young Mormon girl named Jane Withersteen and her battle to overcome the persecution of a local polygamous Mormon sect, whose leader, Elder Tull, is trying to marry her. [87] Her cause is championed by a famed gun-slinger and Mormon killer named Lassiter, who rides in from the west in heroic fashion to rescue her from her "blindness." While in this story Mormon characters are pitted against the heroic Lassiter, they are still described stereotype-breaking terms. For example, Jerry Card, a Mormon cowhand, is portrayed as the finest rider in the West. Elder Tull, the reckless and violent Mormon villain, is still depicted as an "empire builder," as fiercely competent, and as possessing a rugged character. Even the unnamed Mormons who fought against Lassiter, were depicted as brave and manly. Despite going up against the famed Mormon killer, these men "didn't weaken nor lose their nerve."[88] These Mormons were bold and fearless gunslingers in their own right. In this way, Grey offered his readers a more nuanced, even a more heroic, view of Mormons that was filtered through a rescription of the Western narrative.

The tide appeared to have turned for Mormons and Brigham Young alike. The efforts to rewrite the past and remove prejudice were working. During the early twentieth century many popular book-length works about Brigham Young were published for popular consumption including Frank Cannon's *Under the Prophet in* Utah (written with Harvey J. O'Higgins) and his *Brigham Young and His Mormon Empire* (written with George L. Knapp), M. R. Werner's *Brigham Young,* Preston Nibley's *Brigham Young, the Man and His Work,* and Milton Hunter's *Brigham Young, the Colonizer.* Each of these books describe Young through the rhetoric of the Western narrative, as a trailblazing pioneer, powerful politician, influential ecclesiastic, and gifted empire builder.[89] Preston Nibley recognized these changes occurring around him. In an article he wrote for the *Improvement Era* in 1916, "The Character of Brigham Young," Nibley notes, "As the years go by, behold how the tide of abuse is turned to praise, even among his enemies. The mist and the fog of misunderstanding that hid him from the outside world are generally lifting. More and more, he is coming to be regarded by all as the exceptional and remarkable man that he was." Nibley lists as examples the work of history professors who presently argued Young's name "stands as pre-eminent in the history of the development of the Western states." "As time goes on," Nibley concludes, "as men and events adjust themselves, in the true and proper light of history, Brigham Young will yet be recognized as one of the foremost characters America has produced."[90]

Edward H. Anderson was of a similar belief. Writing in the *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* in 1920, Anderson recognized Young's influence as ever-present: "In the whole mountain region of the West, we see the traces of [Young's] marvelous genius and his still more wonderful influence on the minds of his people, their organizations and institutions." Like Nibley, Anderson expressed his belief that Young's name was destined to go down as one of the greatest men to have lived, especially as historians continued to shed new light and understanding to his accomplishments. "Succeeding generations, gazing through the clarifying glasses of time,"

writes Anderson, "will know the truth even better than we, and link his name with the greatest and the noblest characters of earth."[91]

In 1923, biographer Roy F. Dibble wrote biographies of seven Americans who "each represents, better perhaps than any of his contemporaries in the same field, some distinctive and significant trait of his time." The title of Dibble's book, *Strenuous Americans*, reflects the characteristic he focused on highlighting as he traced each man's life. Among those selected from a "hundred possibilities," include "notorious fugitive," Jesse James; "military figure," Admiral George Dewey; "hilarious showman," P. T. Barnum; "capitalist-politician," Mark Hanna; and "religious enthusiast," Brigham Young. According to Dibble, Young's rise through the ranks of Mormonism to stand as the friend and successor to Joseph Smith was on account of Young's strenuous characteristics. He succeeded through "hard word, by discretion in speech, and by an apparent self-effacement that actually kept him in the limelight, he demonstrated his ability as an organizer of movements and a leader of men."[92] Dibble did not hold back from criticizing Young for his methods, arguing that at the end of his life, the "'Old Boss' so dazzled the minds of his subjects that he became indistinguishable from God."[93] But Dibble clearly admired Young, his wealth, lifestyle, and courage. Of Young, Dibble wrote, "He had been tested in every way and had not been found wanting."[94]

In 1926, Herbert E. Bolton, a prominent historian from the University of California, Berkley who was a pioneering voice in the study of the Spanish-American borderlands, published his estimation of Brigham Young in the periodical *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine.* His essay was derived from an address he delivered at the Semi-Centennial Celebration of Brigham Young University, the private Mormon institution named for the Mormon leader. As a non-Mormon historian of the American West, Bolton's message resonated with his largely Mormon audience, providing, in their opinion, an unbiased estimation of Young's contributions

to Western civilization. Bolton's account read exactly like the accounts written my Mormon authors thirty years earlier as they sought to rescript Young and the Mormon's experience as American. Although Bolton did not fully support the theories of Frederick Jackson Turner, he was Turner's student and his account of Mormonism resonates with Turner's belief in the waves of progress.

Brigham Young was, according to Bolton, a man without equal in American history. He was a "devout believer," a "lion-hearted man of iron will," "an organizer," and "the founder of a commonwealth." "Few if any other examples in Angelo-American history can be found," wrote Bolton,

> of a man who so thoroughly dominated a great colonization movement as Brigham Young dominated the founding of Utah. Outstanding in the list of Angelo-American colony builders are the names of Calvert, Penn, Oglethorpe, Stephen F. Austin and Brigham Young. Certainly none of [the other American colony builders] had a harder struggle with nature and with neighbors.[95]

In describing the forward march of progress, Bolton calls the "Westward Movement" America's "great national epic." Bolton then situates the Mormon migration within context of the settlement and development of the West, arguing that the American flag follows the pioneer and not vice versa. This line of reasoning supported the claims made by Mormons in the late nineteenth century that tried to establish this Mormon-as-American-trailblazer narrative as part of the Mormon settlement process. Bolton appears to agree. He writes of Brigham Young and the early Mormon pioneers:

> The early Mormons were true frontiersman. As a sect they were born of religious unrest on a restless frontier. They typified all the forces which had driven the American wedge of settlement between Canada and Mexico. They were urged forth by land hunger, by western buoyancy, and by belief in the Manifest Destiny of American Democracy, just like the Texas pioneers, the Missouri pioneers the Oregon pioneers, and the California pioneers. There the parallel ends. Over and above these forces, of giving them peculiar vigor and making them tough and dynamic where others even seemed soft and sluggish, they were galvanized by a deep religious fervor, which was driven to a white heat by persecution. Made effective by superb leadership, they were given weight by a torrent of European home-seekers in America, which at this very moment was near the pinnacle of its

> fame as a land of plenty and a refuge of the oppressed. Wherever the Mormons went they prospered.[96]

The story had been created, told, retold, and accepted as fact. Mormons were "true frontiersman." They were the heroic characters of the American West. And, more importantly, they were Americans, fueled by the same lust for land and belief in the universality of American Democracy. Mormons believed it; now Americans appeared to have accepted it as true.

Conclusion

The Brigham Young depicted in Darryl F. Zanuck's 1940 film was not the *real* Brigham Young nor did it pretend to be. Instead, it was the celluloid projection of an image of Young created, received, and processed cooperatively by Mormons and non-Mormons. This pattern presents a specific example of the sort of Western message created, received and processed by both Westerners and Easterners in the fashion described by William Goetzmann. Goetzmann concentrated on Western art, but included films in the second edition of his work *The West of the Imagination.* The story of Young's move from outlier to on-screen American icon fits into his overall theory. The essence of Goetzmann's idea is that the West and East – or, in this case, the Mormons and the mainstream – are both active in forging a communication loop which draws each closer to the other.[97] Shortly after Young's death in 1877, Mormons began an aggressive regional campaign to grab control of and shape the prevailing narratives by which their people, beliefs, and practices were being portrayed to the public. Mormon authors, responding to the vitriol published in some of the nation's leading newspapers, published their own books, newspaper articles, and journal articles, some destined for local or regional mailboxes, others with broad national readership. These Mormon authors attempted to present an image of Brigham Young that was both heroic and American. They worked with the belief that in order for Mormons to be accepted by the American mainstream, Americans would need to see Mormons as fellow Americans and not as religious extremists. This was a tall order. But by rewriting their history and projecting Brigham Young as a hero of the American West, Mormons hoped to offer Americans a vision of the Mormon past that glorified America, its accomplishments, its character, and its destiny for greatness. Through this process, by rewriting the past, Mormons hoped to change their future. As George Orwell observed years later, "Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past."

In large part, Mormons were successful. Their efforts to rescript Brigham Young as a heroic American colonizer and Mormons as quintessential Americans gained traction in the East at the same time that authors of popular American literature looked to break from the past and represent Mormon characters in stereotype-breaking ways. Also, as the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth, American involvements and adventures occurred in new areas overseas, from the Philippines to the Far East to Flanders. International episodes had the effect of making Americans look at themselves as a cohesive group facing outward towards a wider world. The opportunity for Mormons to become part of that cohesive group were frequent, and the evolution of Young's image showed this process time and again. Non-Mormon authors including those like Gilbert Patten, Jack London, and Zane Grey that I quote from in this chapter, depicted Mormons as aloof and odd, but also as brave, ideological frontiersman. Furthermore, the Mormon rescription of Brigham Young was echoed by historians and biographers of the early twentieth century, influenced by the theories of Frederick Jackson Turner, who began looking to the West to explain America's exceptionalism. According to These authors found in Young the very characteristics that they wanted or expected to find—courage, strength, diligence, and independence—and helped cement Young's place in contemporary American history as a hero of the American West. In my comprehensive survey of the literature from this era that provides a characterization of Brigham Young, from monograph-length biographies to short newspaper memoirs, from best-sellers to dissertations, from nationally-marketed and distributed tomes to self-published works of fiction, the Brigham Young of the twentieth century is markedly different than the Brigham Young of the nineteenth. This is evident. Though unable to provide examples from each of the work I collected, I would hope the reader would note my broad sampling of authors, backgrounds, texts, and dates as a way of providing an accurate representation of the whole. There were always reasons for Mormons to look at Young with reverence and affection.

But from this point on, non-Mormon Americans could find much to admire in Brigham Young, as well as in his people.

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[1] "Salt Lake City to Become Glittering Capital of Film World for Premiere Showing of Pioneer Epic, 'Brigham Young.'" *Salt Lake Tribune*, 23 August 1940, p. 33.

[2] For a discussion of the film, see Randy Astle and Gideon O. Burton, "A History of Mormon Cinema." *BYU Studies* 46, no. 2 (2007): 13-14.

[3] For more on the film premier of *Brigham Young* and its place in Mormon Cinema, see James V. D'Arc, "The Saints on Celluloid: The Making of the Movie 'Brigham Young.'" *Sunstone Magazine* 4 (Fall 1976): 11-28; Randy Aslte with Gideon O. Burton, "A History of Mormon Cinema." *BYU Studies* 46, no. 2 (2007): 13 – 21; Richard Alan Nelson, "From Antagonism to Acceptance: Mormons and the Silver Screen." *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 10 (1977): 59-69.

[4] "High L.D.S. Officials Preview Brigham Young," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 14 August 1940, p. 8.

[5] Heber J. Grant, "Gratitude for Faith of People," One Hundred and Eleventh Semi-Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1940), p. 96.

[6] While the events and participants are still debated, the Mountain Meadows massacre (September 11, 1857) was a series of attacks on an emigrant wagon train in Southern Utah. For more, see footnote 33

[7] "Bromfield Applauds Brigham Young," *Deseret News*, 23 August 1940, p. 20.

[8] Union Pacific Railroad Advertisement in *Deseret News,* 23 August 1940.

[9] "Brigham Young and His Work." *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 31 August 1877, p. 4.

[10] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1893* (Washington, D.C. 1894), 197-228.

[11] Mormon historian Jan Shipps analyzed articles published between 1861 and 1895 in which both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young were mentioned. In over 53 percent of the articles, Young was emphasized more often than Smith, evidence, she says, of a gradual shift in American periodicals during the late 1860s away from Joseph Smith to Brigham Young as the primary Mormon prophet hero/villain. See Jan Shipps, "From Satyr to Saint: American Perceptions of the Mormons, 1860-1960" in *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 51-97.

[12] The quote is from Theodore Roosevelt's *The Strenuous Life* and was used on the title page opposite a photograph of Brigham Young in F. B. Dibble's *Strenuous Americans* (New York: Boni and Liveright Publishers, 1923). The reference to "monster" comes from John R. G. Hassard, "The Two Prophets of Mormonism." *Catholic World* 26, no. 152 (November 1878): 249.

[13] See, for example, Jan Shipps, "Brigham Young and His Times: A Continuing Force in Mormonism," in *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 244-257; Ronald W. Walker, David J. Whittaker, and James

B. Allen with a contribution by Armand L. Mauss, *Mormon History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 43.

[14] John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993),

[15] Patricia Limerick Nelson, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987).

[16] See Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

[17] See Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 398 and John Turner, *Brigham Young: Pioneer Prophet* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012), 406-7.

[18] Quoted in Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 399.

[19] "Obituary." *Deseret Evenings News*, 30 August 1877 as recorded in *Death of President Brigham Young, a Brief Sketch of His Life and Labors, Funeral Ceremonies with Full Report of the Addresses, Resolutions of Respect, etc.* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1877), 7.

[20] "Obituary." *Deseret Evenings News*, 30 August 1877 as recorded in *Death of President Brigham Young, a Brief Sketch of His Life and Labors, Funeral Ceremonies with Full Report of the Addresses, Resolutions of Respect, etc.* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1877), 7; "Death of President Brigham Young." *Deseret Evening News*, 29 August 1877 as recorded in *Death of President Brigham Young, a Brief Sketch of His Life and Labors, Funeral Ceremonies with Full Report of the Addresses, Resolutions of Respect, etc.* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1877), 1.

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[32] "Brigham Young," *The Examiner*, September 1, 1877, 1102-3.

[33] Rev. Dewitt Talmage, *New York Times*, 28 October, 1877.

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[38] Col. J. T. L. Preston, "Brigham Young." *The Independent . . . Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies,* 20 September 1877.

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[52] Moses Thatcher, "Life and Character of Brigham Young." *Contributor* 10 (July 1889): 331.

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[73] Andrew Jensen, "Brigham Young." Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia. Vol. 1. (Salt Lake City, Andrew Jenson History Company, 1901), 12-13.

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CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION:

Despite the Church's extensive and prolonged efforts to shape the American public's perception of Mormons, their beliefs, and practices during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, unflattering and often inaccurate perceptions remained firmly ensconced in the minds of many Americans today just as they did in 1890. A 2007 Pew survey found, for example, that 62% of respondents believed the Mormon religion to be "very different" from their own. While there is much in Mormonism that is different from Judaism, Catholicism, Islam, and Protestantism, the point is the measure of perceived difference: "very" different. Mormons, on the other hand, would contend that they share much in common with these religions, especially those that follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. This perception of "otherness" was similarly evident in response to poll questions about Mormons themselves. Only 53% of the people surveyed held a "favorable opinion" of Mormons, a result more favorable than the public's view of Muslims (43% favorable) and atheists (35% favorable), but far less favorable than the opinion for evangelical Christians (60% favorable), Catholics, or Jews (both 76% favorable).[1]

In 2009, concerned Mormon leaders hired two advertising agencies, Ogilvy & Mather and Hall & Partners, to conduct their own focus groups and surveys in order to better gauge the American public's perception of Mormons and the root of the disconnect. Their findings reaffirmed the earlier Pew survey: Americans are unfamiliar with and unsure about Mormons. When asked to describe Mormons with a single-word term, most Americans used adjectives with negative connotations: "'secretive,' 'cultish,' 'sexist,' 'controlling,' 'pushy,' 'anti-gay.'"[2] In response to these findings, the Church rolled out an extensive, multi-market, multi-million dollar

television, billboard, and Internet advertisement campaign that used as its motto and hashtag the phrase, "I'm a Mormon." The campaign was designed to introduce "real" Mormons to Americans and to reshape the public's perception of the Church and its members.

The "I'm a Mormon" ad campaign was vibrant, colorful, and hip. The "real" Mormon faces featured men and women from all socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. The message was clear: Mormons are normal; they look and act like typical Americans. In New York City, as audience members sat down to watch Matt Stone's and Trey Parker's hit, musical parody of Mormonism, *The Book of Mormon*, they found good-natured advertisements within the show's *Playbill* featuring close-ups of Mormon men and women's faces with taglines that read, "The book is always better," or "You've seen the play, now read the book." Outside the theater, ads lined buses, taxis, and overlooked Times Square. The advertisement on one billboard featured hodgepodge collection of "typical" Mormons: a Caucasian motorcyclist, a Hispanic nurse, a rock climber with a prosthetic leg, and an African American recording artist all announcing, "I'm a Mormon."

In 2014, the Church tried a different approach to shape their image by releasing their first-ever featured-length documentary film, *Meet the Mormons*. The film follows the lives of six "typical" (yet really quite remarkable) Mormons from around the world to show, as one Church authority said in a video message to members, "what [Mormons] are *really* like."[3] And what *are* Mormons really like according to the film? The film's host, Jenna Kim Jones, explains that "Mormons come in all sizes, shapes, and colors" and, to prove this point, introduces viewers to the handpicked six who were selected to represent their faith: the black Bishop Jermaine Sullivan from Atlanta; Georgia, the Pacific Islander U.S. Naval Academy football coach Ken Niumatalolo: the Costa Rican kick boxer Carolina Muñoz Marin; the 93-year-old retired Army Air Corps Col. Gail "The Candy Bomber" Halvorsen; the Nepalese humanitarian Bishnu Adhikari; and the

formerly homeless missionary mom Dawn Armstrong. Mormons, the film suggests, are normal; they look and act just like you and me.

Many criticized the film for its portrayal of a cool, hip, eclectic and anything-but-homogenous Mormon membership, arguing that in its attempt to portray the Church as multicultural, the film ignored or white-washed the Church's troublesome past with alleged racial and gender discrimination such as the priesthood ban on black members that lasted through 1979 and the ongoing calls from the Ordain Women movement calling for female ordination to the male-only priesthood.[4] While these concerns are real and well-founded, my attention was drawn to something else entirely. In arguing that they look and act like everyone else in America, Mormons were, in essence, making the exact same argument in 2014 as they were back in 1890 and 1900. Much has changed between then and now; yet, little has changed. While in 1890, as I have shown in this dissertation, the Mormon public relations strategy revolved around persuading others of Mormon's American-ness primarily by repacking their past and their image to fit the parameters of the popular western narrative, today Mormons have substituted one popular, quintessentially-American narrative for another. Today, instead of arguing that Mormons are heroic westerners living on and surrounded by uniquely American landscapes, Mormons channel a more modern and more relevant narrative that weaves together multiculturalism and inclusivity. To be clear, Mormons *do* come in all shapes, colors, and sizes. The Church is global in its membership and in its message. In fact, today the church proudly reports that more Mormons live outside of the United States than within. Undoubtedly, Mormons are more than just conservative, white, Utahans, more than just a regional, western Church. That is clear. Furthermore, in my experiences with Mormons, I find them to be sincere, welcoming, and accepting. They are some of the kindest people I have met and know. So Mormons are not necessarily *mis*representing themselves in these advertisements or in the film. But what I find to be so fascinating is how quickly Mormons jettisoned their past history with *ex*clusivity and appear to ignore instances

when the boundaries of Mormon identity were restrictive and unpopular. If the Mormons can successfully tap into the well-established narrative of multiculturalism, using its symbols, rhetoric, and characters to reinterpret their past and establish their present identity, then maybe they will not need to come to terms with or reconcile their past. Maybe they can spin their past in such a way that the prevailing stereotype of Mormons as "controlling," "close-minded," "traditional," and "white" will be forgotten and Mormons will be remembered instead as being open-minded, multicultural, and accepting. The cooption of the popular narrative structure was a successful strategy for acculturation in the early twentieth century. Maybe it will work for Mormons again today.

At the beginning of his book on nineteenth-century anti-Mormonism, *A Peculiar People,* historian Spencer Fluhman begins with this observation: "It will become clear to readers of this volume that LDS identity has been crafted in dynamic tension with its critical appraisals."[5] Such a framework for understanding Mormon identity, as one that hinges upon, responds to, and is intrinsically connected to external criticism and judgment, was true for Mormons of the nineteenth and twentieth century as I have touched on throughout this dissertation, but is also true today in the twenty-first century as the examples above suggestion. Mormons are and have been sensitive to the ways people think of them. But while examining the causes of this tension remains the apparent *raison d'être* for Mormon studies, the strategies implemented by Mormons in response to this tension to establish their cause and to craft their identity remain woefully understudied and thus remain fertile ground for future scholarship. This dissertation demonstrates the value of such study.

Furthermore, Mormons were not the only marginalized people who made a home or, perhaps more accurately, found a refuge, in the great expanse of free land in the American West. The open land and abundant resources presented opportunities for other minorities—among them African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics, Chinese, and a slew of other characters

including laborers, miners, homesteaders, Catholics, and Jews—to make off like Huckleberry Finn and "light out for the territory."[6] Like the Mormons, many of these characters lit out with lofty goals of accumulating wealth, establishing land ownership, and experiencing a sense of cultural belonging and national acceptance but were often forced to adapt to harsh realities that made these dreams unlikely. While seeking one thing, these men and women often ended up accomplishing something else altogether. The marginalized peoples of the American West played their parts. They became homesteaders, pioneers, miners, workers and boosters of western mythologies. They hoped to substantiate their place in the stories of the American West and, by extension, establish their place within the carefully policed boundaries of American identity through the very narratives that excluded, erased, and even annihilated them. The strategies implemented by Mormons were just as easily implemented by other marginalized groups who believed that by adopting these triumphant narratives their path to citizenship would be paved. In reality though, for most, this was not the case. Instead of a golden ticket, these westerners found alcoholism, financial ruin, shattered families, religious persecutions, and even cultural annihilation. Their attempts to establishing a western identity led them to a space where the limits of their identity became palpably clear and well-short of their goal.

The stories and histories of these marginalized westerners, folks like the Mormons who used the western mythology to negotiate a place for their national acceptance and a sense of belonging, remain absent from the historical narratives of the two Western schools of thought tasked with telling them. On one hand, those who subscribed to Turner's Triumphalist vision of the West, referred to today as Old Western Historians, ignored marginalized westerners. Mormons, African Americans, Hispanics, Chinese, and others were not the idealized, heroic faces of the American West. Sure, they believed they could make the heroic, triumphant narrative of the gun-slinging cowboy work for their benefit and inclusion, but their physical and/or religious "limitations" proved to be hurdles too high for even the "happy face histories" to leap.[7] Their

experiences rarely resulted with the same type of fairy-tale transformation that defined the typical narrative of the Old Western History but are stories of disappointment, sadness, and ruin. As Richard White observed, "Things don't end well" for those on the periphery in the West.[8] These marginalized actors *would,* on occasion, find their way into Old Western Histories, though it was often only to demonstrate how the West occasionally provided freedom of opportunity to all people regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity and not to celebrate their attempts to make western narratives work on their behalf.

These narratives of marginalized Americans seeking to establish a national identity through western mythology are also missing from the records of the New Western History, from the writings of scholars like Patricia Nelson Limerick, Richard White, William Cronon, and Donald Worster who sought to rebalance the study of the American West by overturning Turner's Triumphalist histories and giving increased focus to issues of race, class, gender, and environment in the west. The New Western History would appear to be the *ideal* place for studying Mormons and other groups from the periphery. While this school of thought has performed an important work in celebrating the voices from the past that have traditionally been ignored, they too would dismiss the findings of this dissertation for its implied support of the Triumphalist narrative the New Western History has striven to debunk.

Turner's Frontier thesis and the theories of the Old Western History were visionary but not without imperfections. New Western Historians are right to criticize them for ignoring the role and history of minorities, women, and children who called the West home. In their efforts to right the omissions of the past, New Western Historians have painted a portrait of the American West that is far less heroic but far more representative. But in their rush to correct the historical record and distance themselves from Turner's imperfections, New Western Historians have lost sight of the cultural power these narratives offered people, even those people these narratives hoped to subdue. Yes, let us correct, at least according to our present biases, the past. Let's give

voice to the voiceless. But let us not forget or worse, disallow, the power of cultural creations, creations like the western mythology, that in its very nature were discriminatory and subjective, but that offered hope to those people who used it even if they used it ways that were not intended.

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[1] This poll from the Pew Research Center was conducted in 2007 as Mormon Mitt Romney was vying for the Republican Nomination for President of the United States. Although Romney would eventually come up short (the first time), his run did prompt national visibility of the Mormon religion. This poll was important for establishing the benchmarks by which the impact of the "Mormon Moment" would be measured. The Pew Research Center. "Public Opinion About Mormons," 4 December, 2007. Accessible at http://www.pewresearch.org/2007/12/04/public-opinion-about-mormons/

[2] Laurie Goodstein, "Mormons' Ad Campaign May Play Out on the '12 Campaign Trail." *The New York Times*. 17 November, 2011. Accessible at http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/18/us/mormon-ad-campagin-seeks-to-improve-percetions.html?pagewanted=all.

[3] Jeffrey R. Holland, "Elder Holland Introduces 'Meet the Mormons.'" LDS Church. Available at http://www.youtube.come/watch?sns=tw&v=r_5z1K2Ryx0

[4] In an article recently published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints entitled, "Race and the Priesthood," that addresses the church's past policies with racism, particularly the priesthood ban on black members. The article suggests the church's policies were not doctrinal, but were justified by echoing theories of racial superiority and inferiority common in the United States. The article, "Race and the Priesthood," is available online at https://www.lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood?lang=eng. Ordain Women is an organization composed of Mormon men and women who are "seeking equality and ordination to the priesthood." The movement has stalled after the organizations outspoken founder, Kate Kelly, was excommunicated by LDS officials in2014.

[5] Spencer L. Fluhman, *"A Peculiar People": Anti-Mormonism and the Making of Religion in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 1.

[6] Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1929), 405.

[7] Limerick uses this term to describe the typical Triumphalist narrative in, Patricia Nelson Limerick, "What Raymond Charles Knew and Western Historians Forgot." *Old West – New West: Centennial Essays.* Ed. Barbara Howard Meldrum. (Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1993), 33.

[8] Richard White, "Trashing the Trails." *Trails: Toward a New Western History*. Ed. Patricia Nelson Limerick, Clyde A. Milner II, and Charles E. Rankin. (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1991), 33.

APPENDIX

Chronological List of Sources Characterizing Brigham Young, 1877-1940

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University Graduate Assistantship, Penn State Harrisburg, 2007-08
Irwin Richman Scholarship in American Studies, Penn State Harrisburg, 2007

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"Playing for Change: The Performative Functions of Children's Piano Play." *Children's Folklore Review* 35 (2013): 45-55.
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